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LEATHERWORK



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F. R. SMITH, F.R.S.A.



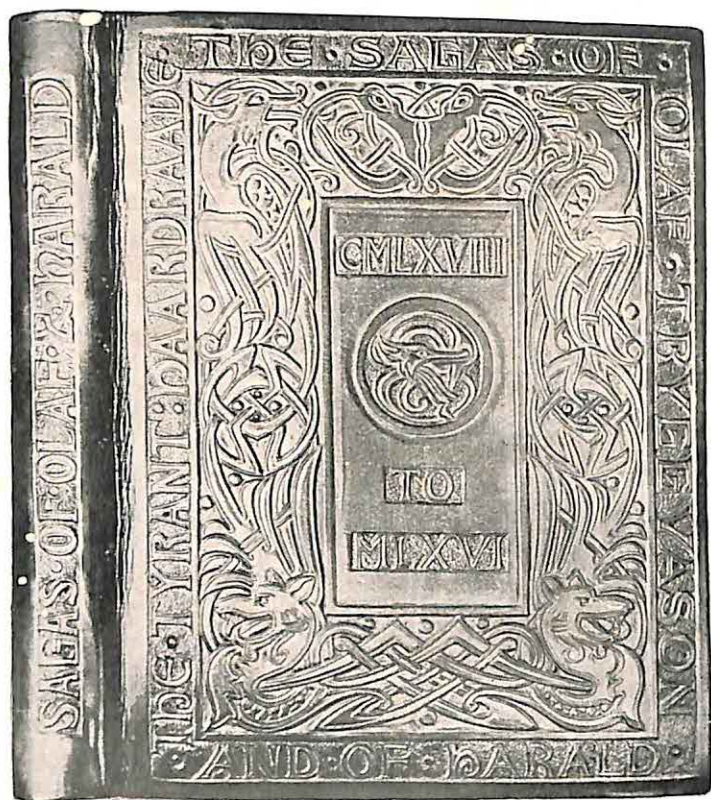
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PRACTICAL
LEATHERWORK

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Frontispiece

PRACTICAL LEATHERWORK

A TEXTBOOK FOR STUDENTS AND
CRAFT WORKERS

BY
F. R. SMITH, F.R.S.A.



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PREFACE

THERE are many who, in the pursuit of craftwork, either for pleasure or for profit, are attracted to the use of leather as a means whereby to express their creative instincts. The encouragement to practise the craft of Art Leatherwork, as with all other crafts, leads through the art of design. Involving as it does the selection of good and suitable material, contrivance for special purpose, expert workmanship and proper finish, true design is an essential part of good workmanship and of the craft itself.

With this in mind, I have written PRACTICAL LEATHERWORK in the hope that it will form a happy approach to this delightful craft, and be of practical value to those to whom artistic craftsmanship offers an occupation, or perhaps a means of livelihood.

F. R. S.

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INTRODUCTION

WHEN primitive man began to use the skins of beasts as material for making additional protective covering for his own body, he certainly showed rare judgment, and, when at a later stage the art of preparing and curing the pelts slowly developed, a material was given to the world which, after untold ages, still remains the strongest flexible substance in common use.

The skill of the tanner is, indeed, worthy of admiration, for, by treating the natural skins with oils, manures, and various chemical and vegetable agents, he produces at will a material having the hardness of metal or the softness of woven silk—ever aided in his work by the knowledge and experience of generations of craftsmen extending far into the past.

Truly, there is “nothing like leather.” Its durability, strength, and lightness, and the ease with which it can be cut and joined, make it an almost ideal substance for use for a thousand and one purposes.

The desire for adornment and ornamentation is almost as old as mankind, and it must have been very early in history that the decoration of dressed skins began to develop. Throughout the East this art has been practised from very early times, particularly among the wandering tribes of Asia and northern Africa, who decorated their armour and harness with dyed wool and silk, enriched with precious stones. The art was introduced into Spain by the Moors during their occupation, and in this country it reached a very

high standard of perfection. The Crusaders, also, brought back many of the methods of the Saracens, whilst modelled leather was introduced to the Venetians by Oriental merchants. The monks of the Middle Ages used modelled leather for binding their finely illuminated manuscripts, and a number of beautiful specimens of their work has come down to us, examples of which may be seen in the British and other museums.

The important point to notice in connection with the various stages of development of this art is that the treatment was in each case unique, and all students of the craft should aim for similar originality. In dealing with leather you have a material which may be led but cannot be driven. Firm, but gentle, treatment and much loving care and attention will be rewarded by the expression of your personal ideas in an article of lasting beauty, which is art in its truest sense.

PR^oACTICAL LEATHERWORK

CHAPTER I

SELECTION OF SKINS

OWING to the fact that skins vary in character, no two being quite alike, careful selection of a skin most suitable for the work in hand is a most important factor. A skin may show considerable variation in different parts; for example, the leather is most elastic in the direction of width, which is, of course, essential in order that the animal may breathe. Thongs, straps, and laces, therefore, are always cut in the direction of length of the skin. (Plate II, Fig. 1.)

When choosing a skin it is better to select the small rather than the large, for as the animal grows its skin becomes coarser, and it is also more liable to become damaged by pests or torn on fencings, hedges, or rocks which may be in the neighbourhood of its pastures.

SOFT LEATHERS. If the work in hand is of a soft, fancy character, there is choice of a wide range of skins in various colours. More generally these are dressed either for a natural grain on the smooth side or a good pile on the velvet side, but both these qualities can be obtained in combination when desired.

The following is a list of useful soft leathers for the beginner—

SHEEPSKIN. This is dressed to retain the natural

grain and has a brown antique finish. The skins vary in size from 6 to 10 sq. ft. This material is very suitable for bags, blotters, and book-covers, etc. It is largely used for cushions to tone with dark oak furniture.

VELVET PERSIANS. These skins are selected from the choicest Persian sheep, and have a fine silky pile. They are admirable for making up dainty articles, such as vanity bags, cushions, table runners, etc. The average size of the skins is $5\frac{1}{2}$ sq. ft., and they are obtainable in a wide range of colours.

Although these skins can be had with good grain in addition to a good pile, their perfection is usually judged by the velvet side.

In dyeing, most colours yield a percentage of "rejects," that is, skins which fall below the usual standard when grading. These can be purchased, but are only fit for practice, linings, or small work.

VELVET SHEEP. These are made from English sheep, and are about twice the substance of Persians. They have not quite such a good pile as Persians, but are generally very free from imperfections. They form excellent material for stout work, and either side can be used. The skins vary in size from 5 to 7 sq. ft. Although a good range of colours is obtainable, the shades are not so delicate as the velvet Persians.

LACING PERSIANS. These are somewhat thinner than the velvet Persians referred to above, and, as the name implies, they are more generally used for cutting into laces, for linings, and gussets. They are supplied in various shades of brown, and also in the "natural" colour.

SKIVERS. These are very thin and offer little resistance to strain. They are the grain or hair side of

sheep-skins, and are only used for lining or similar purposes where they are supported by heavier leather. The skins average about 10 sq. ft., and they are supplied in all shades.

MODELLING LEATHERS. Leathers for modelling are specially prepared, not only to receive design expressed in relief, but, more important still, to retain it. The thicknesses vary from $\frac{3}{64}$ to $\frac{3}{32}$ of an inch. The grain is fine and the skins are light in colour ("natural"), so that the colours, when staining, are not affected by the colour of the skin.

The following is a list of useful modelling leathers for the beginner—

NATURAL ENGLISH CALF. This is the most suitable leather for modelling and staining. The best of the skin is in the "back," though portions of the "belly" may be found very suitable for gussets and similar work. Various thicknesses ($\frac{1}{32}$ in. to $\frac{5}{64}$ in.) are obtainable, and the dimensions of the skins vary from 10 to 12 sq. ft. If a whole skin is not required, selected panels of suitable thickness are usually cut to size at slightly increased cost.

Owing to the ease with which this leather can be worked, it is admirably suited for delicate modelling, and it may be readily stained.

BROWN ENGLISH CALF. This can be obtained in medium and dark shades, and is a suitable material for use where an "antique" finish is required. The skins vary from 10 ft. to 12 ft. each.

PRACTICE CALF "NATURAL." This is obtainable in skins from 10 ft. to 14 ft. each, and is an excellent material for the beginner as it stains and models well. It can also be had in dark and medium browns.

MODELLING HIDE. This is cheaper than calf, but is not so easy to manipulate, and it is more suitable for broad patterning. It takes stain well. It is excellent for making up articles which will be required to withstand hard wear. The sizes of skins vary from 40 to 50 sq. ft., and thicknesses from $\frac{3}{64}$ in. to $\frac{7}{64}$ in.

SHEEP AND COMMON "BASIL." The stain does not show to the best advantage on these skins, and the modelling should be of a broad character. They are very suitable leathers for practice in general manipulation during the early stages of progress in the craft.

THONGS. It is preferable to buy these ready cut. They are obtainable in "natural" calf (for subsequent staining to suit the work in hand), "antique," Persian sheep, or with a special edge for fine work. The cut thongs vary in length from 30 in. to 36 in., or may be obtained in continuous lengths.

CHAPTER II

TOOLS

SOFT LEATHERWORK. The equipment necessary for soft leatherwork is not extensive. A cutting board will be required.

The most suitable form is a piece of zinc, approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. square and about $\frac{1}{32}$ in. (20 S.W.G.) thick. Millboard or thick glass may be used for this purpose, but the metal is preferable as it does not take the edge off the knife so quickly.

For cutting the holes to receive thongs, a pair of six-hole spring punch pliers is necessary. These produce holes of various sizes which may also be worked into effective patterns. (Plate 2, Fig. 2.)

Further equipment necessary consists of: a sharp knife; a pair of scissors; a straight-edge to guide the cutting; a foot rule or measuring tape; a spring bow pencil compass; and a tin of vegetable glue or tube of seccotine. A light hammer will be useful for fitting press-buttons, shenes for frames, and similar fittings. (See Plate 2.)

An excellent adhesive for use with soft leather is prepared vegetable glue, which is economical and cleanly in use: but if desired, a very good paste can be made up as follows: Mix two tablespoonfuls of flour and a pinch of alum with sufficient water to form a creamlike consistency. Add a pint of cold water and bring the mixture slowly to boiling point, stirring all the time. After allowing it to simmer for a few

minutes, drop in a spot of oil of cloves. This helps to preserve the paste. When cold, place in a glass jar and keep air-tight until required.

MODELLED LEATHER. The tools required are similar to those employed in soft leatherwork. There are, however, certain additions and exceptions, details of which are given below—

A “thonging tool” with a small mallet to drive it, takes the place of the six-hole pliers required for the lighter work. With this tool, a slot is produced, which allows the thong to lie flat. If round holes were used in the heavier modelling leathers, they would cause the thongs to curl up in an unsightly manner. (Plate 2, Fig. 3.) Where work is to be produced in large quantities, a “thonging wheel” may be substituted. When this is rolled under pressure, it pierces a continuous line of slots.

The cutting board will be of the same type as for work in soft leather, and may be used to support the work whilst the design is being modelled.

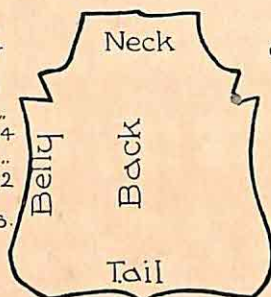
In no circumstances should a *steel* straight-edge be used on modelling leather, as the stain produced by this metal cannot be removed.

The most suitable modelling tools for a beginner are the “broad modeller,” which has a broad blade at one end, and a finer blade at the other (Plate 2, Fig. 4); and a double-ended “Dresden,” which is much finer than the “modeller” for finished work. (Plate 2, Fig. 5.) As the skill of the student develops, and work of a more ambitious character is undertaken, various other tools may be useful; but it is better to begin with these two only.

It is essential to use a flexible knife for paring

TOOLS.


 $\frac{3}{64}$
 $\frac{1}{16}$
 $\frac{5}{64}$
 $\frac{3}{32}$
 Thicknesses.



Grain
or hair side



"Pile"
Area of
muscular
fibre.

1

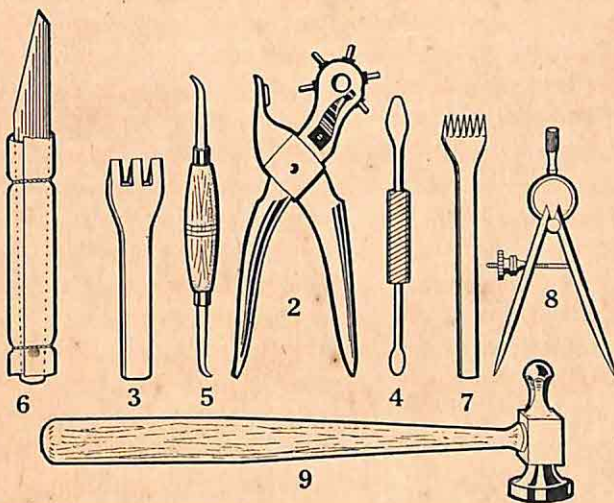


Plate 2

stout leather, a stiff blade being quite useless. The best knives for the purpose have no fixed handle, but a strip of leather is wrapped round the steel, and secured with string to form a grip. (Plate 2, Fig. 6.) If a shoemaker's old knife, still long enough to be flexible, can be obtained, it will serve the purpose very well.

Long experience has made a shoemaker expert in paring hide, and much may be learned by watching him at work.

An "edge shave" is very useful for trimming off the under edges of thongs. This allows them to lie flat, thereby adding to the neatness of the work. It is also used for thinning the edges of the leather.

Blunt needles, as used by saddlers, are employed for stitching, and time may be saved in marking out by the use of a "stitching tool" (Plate 2, Fig. 7), which gives a line of evenly-spaced holes. Sewing silks are obtainable in a wide range of colours.

MATTING TOOLS. These are used for ornamenting backgrounds, and may be obtained in a variety of patterns. The beginner can make quite a number of interesting patterns by filing cross lines on circular or square nail heads; while circles can be obtained by reversing a mapping pen nib on its holder. When proficiency has been gained, the more elaborate punches can be obtained as required.

STAINS. Stains for colouring modelled and other natural leathers are sold in powder form. There are two kinds, one for mixing with water and the other with methylated spirit, and it is important to see that the kind required is obtained. For the beginner it is better to use "spirit stain." This is quicker in application

than water stain, and boxes are made up containing twelve tubes of colour, or the powders may be bought by weight. A good plan is to mix up the powders with a little spirit and keep them in well-corked bottles until required, when a sufficient quantity can be diluted to the required tone.

When using these stains it should be borne in mind that the skin of the human body takes the stain quite as readily as the animal leather which is being worked upon, and a permanent stain for the latter is not likely to be easily removed from the former. Some protection is therefore indispensable, and rubber gloves answer the purpose very well.

CHAPTER III

FITTINGS

PRESS BUTTONS. There are times when the press button forms a useful accessory. The best quality buttons are made of brass throughout (with the exception of the celluloid cap); and it is far better to use these than the cheaper type, which have steel shells, since this metal blackens and finally rots through the leather. The springs in the better buttons are also much stronger, and retain their snap for a longer period. Press buttons can be obtained in colours to tone with most shades of leather.

Fancy ornamental buttons are obtainable with gold, silver, oxidized, or enamelled finish.

For fixing press buttons it is necessary to have a set of suitable punches and a die. Since buttons Nos. 3, 4, and 5 are most generally used, a punch to suit these will be found most useful. This tool will also serve for fixing the ornamental buttons.

CLASPS. Nickel or gilt clasps may be used in preference to press buttons for certain work, and it is generally possible to select patterns which will suit the design of the article to which they are to be fitted.

FRAMES. For bags and purses it is sometimes necessary to use metal frames for the inner pockets. These are supplied in various sizes, and include a soft iron frame, called a "shene," which is closed upon the edge of the leather before the main frame is fitted. The shene may be closed by hammering over very carefully

on a wooden block, or more easily by the use of special pliers having wide jaws.

Bag frames of "ivory" are obtainable specially pierced for attachment to the leather bag by thongs or stitching, and these may be used with good effect, but need gentle handling as the material is very fragile, and if used for any but very small articles they are liable to become damaged in use. This applies to the hinge more particularly.

RUSKIN STONES. In certain work these can be used with very good effect. They are small pieces of brightly-coloured glazed pottery, and may be obtained in round, oval, and other shapes. In mounting, they are placed behind a smaller hole in the work, and fixed in position by a piece of leather pasted over the back.

As the student advances in the art, the need for other tools may arise. These may be made or purchased, but excellent work may be achieved with the tools and fittings mentioned. Now that handicrafts have returned to popularity, there are many firms who specialize in the supply of leathers, tools, fittings, and sundries, and their catalogues can usually be obtained gratis.

CHAPTER IV

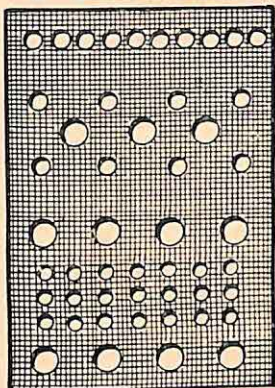
SOFT LEATHERWORK

SOFT LEATHERWORK. There are many pitfalls in the path of the unwary student, and it is not possible to advance far in leathercraft before baffling little problems are encountered. These can only be handled satisfactorily in one way—the right way. Many of the processes look so easy when carried out by an expert, that the beginner may be rather over-confident. After a few attempts, however, he will come to realize that only by extreme care in detail, and accuracy in workmanship, together with a knowledge of the various details of manipulation, can he become a real artist in leather. He should not be discouraged by the errors he may find in his first efforts. Such are inevitable, but once the “right way” has been pointed out and clearly understood, it is not likely that the errors will be repeated.

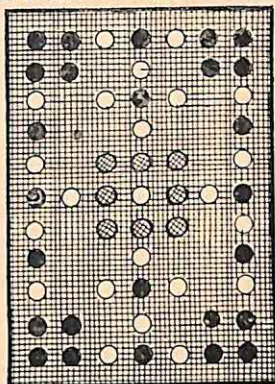
It is well, therefore, to commence with a piece of leather on which to practise. Its cost will be amply repaid by the experience gained, and errors can be corrected before proceeding too far.

PUNCHING HOLES FOR THONGING. As a guide, a line will be required $\frac{1}{8}$ in. from the edge of the leather. To obtain this, set the compass points $\frac{1}{8}$ in. apart, and, running the needle point down the edge of the leather, mark off the line with the pencil for the full length required for thonging. It is preferable, although not essential, to do this on the smooth side of the leather. Curves are not likely to present any difficulty. The

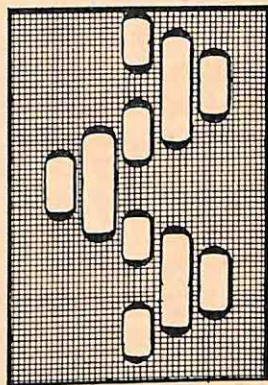
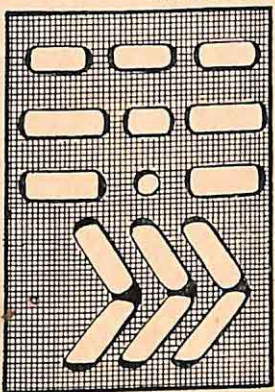
PUNCHED



PATTERNS.



LACED PATTERNS



guide line should finally be divided off into intervals of $\frac{1}{8}$ in. The points of intersection will be the centre for the holes.

Punch the holes with the pliers. Be careful to see that the centre of the punch coincides with the points marked on the leather. It will be found that after some practice, holes can be punched at regular intervals without the aid of the centre points, the guide line being all that is required. Sometimes, when several pieces of leather are in use, the punch does not pierce quite through. When this occurs, place an old scrap of leather at the back and punch through the entire thickness. The difficulty will then be overcome. When punching holes at some distance from the edge of the material care should be taken to ensure that the leather is not pinched by the joint of the pliers.

SIMPLE DESIGNS. A great variety of pleasing designs can be formed when punching by varying the spacing, grouping, and size of holes. (See Plate 3, Fig. 1.) The patterns should first be worked out on squared paper and then transferred to the back of the leather through carbon paper.

By saving the discs cut from various leathers and inserting them into holes punched in leather of a contrasting shade, designs in colour can be produced. (See Plate 3, Fig. 2.)

When the pattern is to form the centre of a large piece of work, such as a cushion cover, it is advisable to use single punches and a hammer. This reduces the risk of damaging the leather to a minimum.

Patterns can also be obtained by lacing thongs through the holes. Fig. 3, Plate 3, shows various forms of running stitch, and also shows a diagonal stitch

which may be reversed and doubled to produce the "herring bone" pattern. Fig. 4 is based on the triangle.

The thongs can be of Persian velvet in contrasting colours, or of calf, either left "natural" or stained to harmonize. Cutting the thongs requires a great deal of care, and for general purposes it is much better to purchase these ready for use. Odd bits of Persian velvet can be used for cutting an occasional thong. This is done by first trimming the piece to a circular shape, and then cutting the thong spirally to the centre. Persian velvet thongs are not so strong as the calf, and are only used when little strain is placed upon the work. The calf thongs form a nice decorative contrast in the soft leathers and have the advantage of making the work firmer.

Quite a large number of useful articles, such as book-markers, needle cases, calendars, table-mats, spectacle cleaners, serviette rings, etc., can be made from small pieces of leather decorated in the forms given. For children or beginners this work is valuable educationally, for not only does it afford plenty of scope for individual treatment, but it lays the foundations for that knowledge of structural and ornamental design so essential to the advanced craftsman.

THONGS. Before using calf thongs, each under edge (i.e. the flesh side) is removed with the edge shave. (Fig. 2, Plate 4.) This is done by laying the thong on the cutting board with the grain (or smooth side) down, and whilst stretching it taut between the thumb and second finger of the left hand, run the shave along one edge. Reverse the thong and repeat the process on the other edge. In this way the white edges of the thong

are removed, allowing it to "lie" much more neatly when threaded.

To prepare a thong for threading, cut one end to a point with the scissors. Carefully dip this point in a good adhesive* and allow to dry. This will produce a firmness which makes lacing much easier.

Care should be taken that the thongs are not drawn too tightly in soft leather, or a puckered appearance will result. In the examples shown in the illustration, the thongs are of calf.

Very long thongs should not be used. Not only is considerable time wasted in pulling the strip through hole after hole, but the thong will become narrower under the continual strain. It is probable also that the edges will become frayed. The maximum length convenient for threading is about 3 ft., and further lengths can be joined on as required.

To make a joint in the thonging, the top side of one of the ends, and the under side of the other, should be "skived" or pared to a chisel edge. A very small quantity of adhesive is then rubbed on each, and the joint made. The two pieces should be pressed firmly together until set. The joint should be long enough to traverse at least two holes. Calf and Persian thongings may both be joined in this way. (Fig. 1, Plate 4.)

For patterning, the ends of short thongs may be secured on the under side of the work by means of a little adhesive, or they may be stitched in position if the nature of the work requires it.

For a thonged edge the procedure is as follows—

Thread through the first hole from front to back,

* There are many excellent adhesives on the market, and the author feels it would be invidious to single any one out for special recommendation.

THONGING · TASSELS.

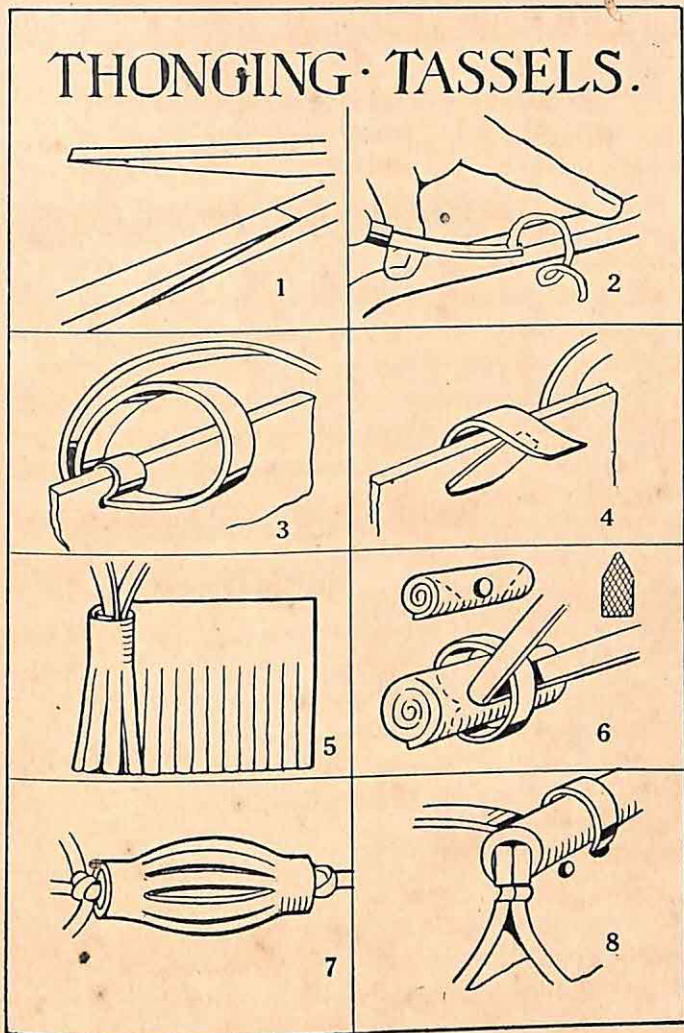


Plate 4

leaving a skived end towards the front. This skived end should be sufficiently long to be carried up over the edge to the back, so that when the first stitch is brought over from the back to front, it crosses the loose end at the back and holds it in place. The skived end is further secured by means of a little adhesive. (Fig. 4, Plate 4.)

An alternative method is to thread the thong through the first hole from front to back, but in this case a skived end, about $\frac{1}{2}$ in. length, is left at the front; this is carried straight over and stuck down at the back. The thong is then brought over to the front, threaded a second time through the first hole from back to front, and finally pulled tight, thus binding the skived end. If done carefully, this is a very neat form of starting. (Fig. 3, Plate 4.)

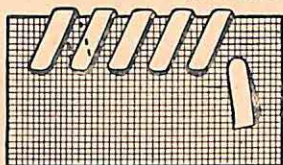
Endings are dealt with in a similar manner, and should present no difficulty.

Thonging well done is a decoration in itself. Many a good piece of work has been spoiled because of lace-holes unequally spaced or not in line. These points require careful attention as they reveal the interest the craftsman takes in his art.

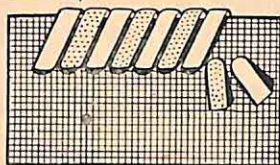
THONGING THE EDGE. This may be done in various ways, but the simplest method is that known as "single whipping." (Fig. 1, Plate 5.) This stitch is the same as plain oversewing, that is to say, the thong is threaded from the front, back over the edge, and through the front again.

Less frequently used, but quite effective, is the "double whip," shown in Fig. 2, Plate 5. This is similar to the "single whip," but the holes are spaced a little closer together and two thongs are threaded

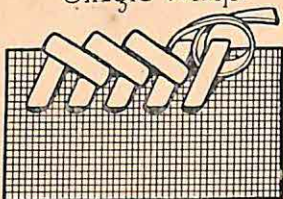
STITCHES.



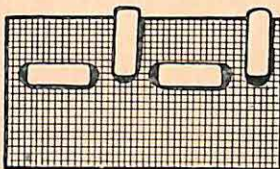
Single Whip.



Double Whip.



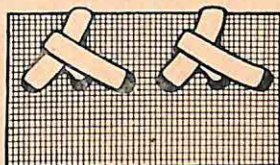
Blanket Stitch.



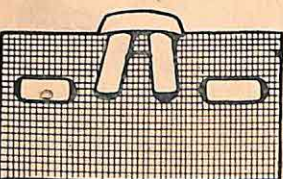
Whip and Run.



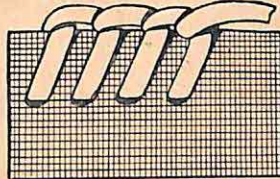
Crossed Whip.



Lock and Run.



Double Lock and Run



Blanket Stitch.

through alternate holes. The best method is to arrange the holes so that the thongs just touch each other where they lie side by side at the front. A pleasing effect can be obtained with this stitch where thongs of different colours are used.

Another stitch, known as the "whip and run," is shown in Fig. 4, Plate 5. One stitch is whipped as before, but the next is carried along horizontally, followed by the second whip.

The "crossed whip," shown in Fig. 5, is worked by using two thongs, one on each side of the leather.

Fig. 3, Plate 5, shows what is termed the "blanket stitch," in which two thongs are employed. One of the thongs is first threaded in the simple whip as described above; when this is finished, thread the second thong (working now on the edge of the leather) back under the first stitch of the whip, forward over the first and second stitches, back under the second, forward over the second and third, and so on. The second thong will draw itself to the front, as shown in the illustration. This stitch is also carried out as in embroidery. The thong is taken through the holes from back to front, brought to the top edge, and looped to form a knot. It is then carried along the edge as far as the next hole. The thong is taken down and through the hole from the back, and up to the top edge, and looped through the portion lying along it, thus forming a second knot. This process is repeated along the edge to be thonged.

To start the simple "lock and run," illustrated in Fig. 6, the thong is first attached at the back. It is then threaded through the first hole to the front, carried up over the edge to the back, and through the

8/5

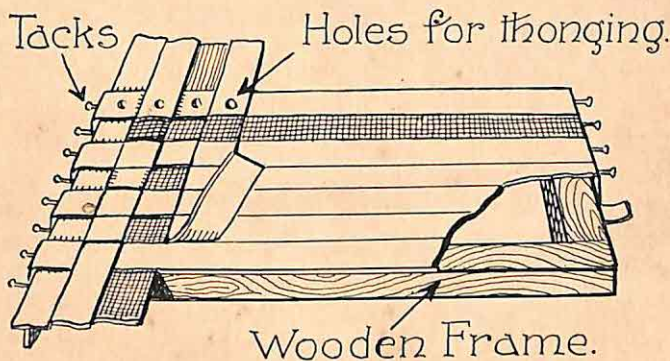
WEAVING.



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Plate 6



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second hole to the front again ; it is then carried *under* the first stitch at the front, back *over* the same stitch (still at the front), and lastly through the third hole from front to back. The whole process is then repeated.

Fig. 7 illustrates "double lock and run." Begin at the back ; thread through the first hole to the front ; run one spacing along front, through second hole to back, up over the edge, down the front, through third hole to back, up *under* existing stitch at the edge, down the back, through fifth hole to the front. Then begin the second run and repeat.

After some little practice, the right degree of tightening for the various stitches will be arrived at. When the work is completed the stitches are carefully hammered to flatten them, and if properly worked they should set evenly along the edge.

TASSELS, HANDLES, ETC. An ordinary tassel is made from an oblong piece of leather, fringed to within $\frac{1}{4}$ in. from the top edge. A little adhesive is rubbed on the smooth side of the uncut portion and the leather rolled round two or more thongs. The end is pressed down firmly with adhesive and held in the fingers until it sets. For illustration see Plate 4, Fig. 5.

Beads, etc., for decorating are kept in position by knotting the thongs.

Small handles can be made in a similar manner to the tassel. An oblong piece of leather has slits cut to within $\frac{1}{4}$ in. of the top and bottom edges. Adhesive is applied to the uncut portions and the leather rolled round a core consisting of several thongs. Whilst the adhesive is still tacky, take the ends of the thongs in each hand, and with the thumbs push the two uncut

edges towards each other. This gives the handle a slashed effect. (See Fig. 7, Plate 4.)

FASTENING FOR SOFT LEATHER BAG. The leather is cut as in Fig. 6, Plate 4, and rolled in the same way as with the tassel. When set, a hole is punched through the centre of the roll to take a thong. One method of attaching the thong is to fold it in two, place the roll in the fold and bring the two ends of the thong back through the hole so that they emerge one on each side of the fold. (Fig. 6, Plate 4.) The two ends are attached to the flap of the bag. A loop of leather or thong, placed in the body of the bag, completes the fastening.

STAINING THONGS. To colour the thongs, pour sufficient quantity of the concentrated spirit dye (already bottled) into an old saucer, and dilute with methylated spirit to the required tone. Care should be taken to mix enough dye, as it is difficult to match the tone.

Holding the thong down with a camel-hair brush in one hand, use the other to draw it slowly through the liquid. Then hang it to dry over a strained cord or chair back (protected by a newspaper).

CHAPTER V

WOVEN LEATHER—APPLIQUE—PIERCED LEATHER AND SEWING

WOVEN LEATHER. Fairly simple in execution, woven leather with its opportunities for simple design has a charm quite its own. The only apparatus required is a wooden frame to size (a box answers the purpose) and some pins or tacks. The leathers to be used are cut to the required length and width on the cutting board, care being taken that the edges are parallel. Oddments can be used up in this way for making small articles.

A set of strips are slightly strained across one way of the frame and pinned or tacked in position. (Plate 6.) With these leathers the strips should touch, but with heavier leathers a space about the thickness of the leather is left between. Odd numbers of strips are required. A second set of strips is then woven over and under across the first set, taking care that each strip fits up closely to the one before it. When finished, the weaving is made secure in either of the following ways : (1) When used for small mats, etc., holes are punched along the outside strip and cross-pieces and a thong threaded through them right round the article (Plate 6), or (2) when used for box tops, etc., it is secured on the whole of its under surface by an adhesive. For larger articles, such as fire-screens, etc., the weaving is left tacked to the frame, and inserted thus in the screen. It is advisable to work all patterns out on squared paper, before commencing, thus saving time and leather.

PLAITING. The more simple forms of plaiting are well known and need not be described here. Small handles and straps may be made up in this way with good effect.

APPLIQUE. This form of decoration is very suitable for larger articles, such as bags, cushion covers, and the like, and if a simple but bold design is selected the results are very pleasing.

Flowers, monograms, etc., are cut in thin leather and the edges pared down on the under-side. Paste is then applied and the decoration firmly pressed into position on the leather to be decorated. The edges are then outlined with the modelling tool, or may be stitched round with silk. For examples, see Fig. 1, Plate 7.

PIERCED LEATHER-WORK. This consists in cutting out a design from one leather like a stencil. A second leather is then pasted on the back so that it is seen through the apertures. (See Fig. 2, Plate 7.) This form of decoration is very effective when leathers of different colours are used.

The pattern is first traced on the face of the leather by interposing a piece of carbon paper between the paper design and the leather. The lines of the design are then traced over with a hard pencil. The portion of the pattern through which the background is to show is then cut away with a very sharp pointed knife. In doing this, care should be taken to see that the leather is cut right through. Should a piece not be completely severed, it is useless to attempt to tear it away as the leather will be distorted and the work spoiled. Always work from the centre of the design outwards.

When the cutting is finished, turn the pierced leather face downwards and give the back a thin coat of paste.

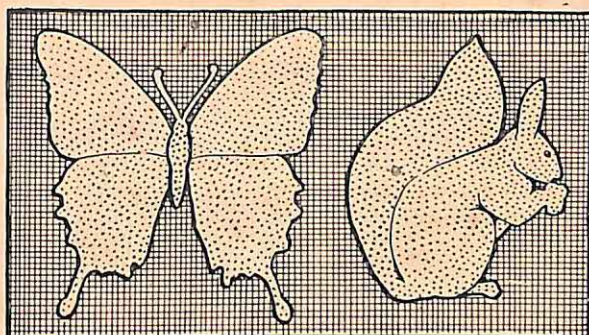
Then carefully lay the background leather face downwards on top of it, and press the two together gently with the flat of the hand. Finally place a board over all, with a heavy weight on top, and leave until set.

When the work is dry, the edges of the design should be carefully gone over with the rounded end of the modelling tool, the cut edges being worked down so that they merge into the background.

SETTING RUSKIN STONES. A simple method of fitting these stones is to cut a hole in the leather slightly smaller than the stone, and fix the latter behind the hole by pasting a piece of leather over the back. A more elaborate way is to cut out a design or monogram and mount the stone so that it peeps through. (See Figs. 3, 4, and 5, Plate 7.)

SEWING. Where sewing of light or fancy leathers is necessary, this may be done on an ordinary sewing machine. For hand sewing it is much easier to first pierce holes for the needle by means of a "stitch tool" or "pricking iron." A line is first marked out where the stitching is to be done, and the holes are then pierced by striking the tool with a hammer. To ensure uniform spacing, when the second group of holes is to be pierced, the first prong of the tool should be placed in the last existing hole. A good quality of sewing silk or thread may be used, and two needles should be employed, one from each side of the leather. It is advisable for a beginner to practice with one needle only until confidence has been gained.

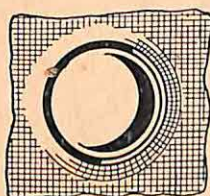
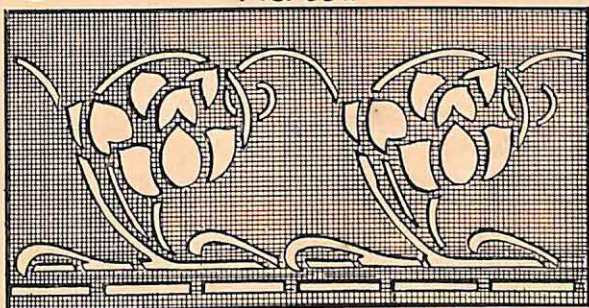
Stitching should not be employed where thonging is used; the article should be carried out entirely in one medium.



1 Applique.

2

Pierced.



3

Mouthing



4



5

Ruskin Stones.

CHAPTER VI

FITTING PRESS BUTTONS, CLASPS, FRAMES— COVERING BLOTTERS

FITTING PRESS BUTTONS. There are four parts to a press button, viz.—

1. The cap.
2. The cap eyelet.
3. The spring.
4. The spring eyelet.

To fit a button to the flap of a bag or pouch, first determine the position of the cap and prick a hole through the leather by means of a pin. This will mark the centre of the button. Next set the flap true with the sides and bottom of the bag and push the pin straight through the hole into the front of the bag. This marks the centre of the spring.

Before punching the holes for the fittings, mark the leather lightly with the cutting edge of the punch. Remove the punch and see whether the pinhole is in the centre of the ring made by the punch mark. Correct if necessary, and punch through. In soft leathers it is advisable to make the hole a little smaller than required as this helps to bind the fitting. The cap eyelet will require a larger hole than the spring eyelet.

A special tool is sold for fixing the fittings in place. Put the cap upside down in the hollow of the brass die, and lay it on the table. Push the cap eyelet through the hole in the flap from the *under-side*. Reverse the flap so that the under-side is uppermost and place the protruding rim of the eyelet into the reversed cap. Insert the pointed or positive punch in the hole of the

eyelet, and with a smart blow from a hammer drive the two parts of the cap together.

Now insert the spring cap eyelet from the inside of the bag and place the flat side of the die under the eyelet. Put the spring over the projecting part of the eyelet, and with the hollow, or negative punch, clinch the two parts together as before. •

It should be borne in mind that the *large* holes for the cap eyelet are always in the flap, and the *smaller* holes for the spring eyelet in the bag.

Should the spring require regulating, squeeze it gently with the pliers to loosen, or tap it gently with a hammer to tighten the grip.

In cases where the leather is very thin and the strain is likely to tear it, it is advisable to paste a piece of thin, non-stretching leather behind the portion that carries the button.

Fancy buttons are fitted in a similar manner. (See Plate 8.)

FITTING CLASPS. The clasp in general use consists of the "knob" and the "catch."

The knob, with its supporting strips of metal is to be riveted to the flap of the bag or purse.

The leather of the flap is placed between the metal strips (the knob being on the under side), and these are pressed together gently until they grip. Holes are ready pierced in the metal strips to receive the rivets. Having made sure that the fitting is accurately placed, push a stout pin or fine awl through both holes, thus piercing the leather. Remove the pin and insert the rivets from the outside of the flap. It will be found that they protrude too far on the inside and the superfluous length should be cut off (using old scissors or cutting

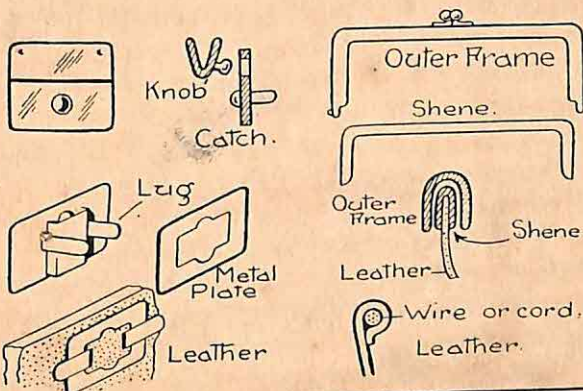
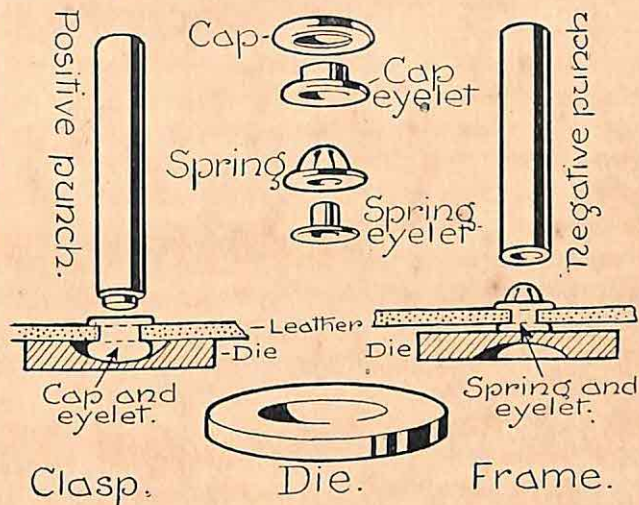
pliers) to within a short distance of the fitting. Place the fitting, with the rivet-heads downwards, on the flat side of the press button die, and hammer the cut ends of the rivets gently until they spread and grip the fitting. The hammer should be used lightly or the rivets will be bent.

Set the flap straight with the sides and bottom of the bag and press the knob gently into the leather. This marks the position for the hole in the catch. Behind the catch are two or more small bent lugs and a thin steel plate. Raise the lugs perpendicular to the fitting and remove the plate. Place the catch on the leather so that the hole coincides with the mark already made by the knob, and press gently, causing the lugs to make slight marks on the leather. Cut slits through these impressions with a sharp knife, making the openings large enough to receive the lugs; push the latter through and thread the plate over them at the back of the leather. The lugs are then bent over to hold the plate firm, and a thin piece of leather pasted over the back of the fitting on the inside of the bag. (See Plate 8.)

FITTING A BAG FRAME. The "shene" or inner frame should be fitted first. After shaping the upper edge of the leather as necessary, insert it in the hollow of the shene, lay the latter on any hard, flat surface, and close on to the leather by light hammering, or it may be closed by squeezing in broad-nosed pliers. In any case the leather should completely fill the hollow of the shene, and care should be taken to see that the leather is not bruised or cut in the closing.

When satisfied that the shene has been properly fitted, push it well home into the bag frame proper,

PRESS BUTTONS, ETC.



and fasten the whole by means of small rivets, holes for which are provided near the hinge. The riveting should be carried out carefully in the manner described under "Fitting Clasps."

The purpose of the shene is to reinforce the edges of the leather, but if for any reason no shene is available, quite an effective substitute may be devised by folding the edges of the leather round a piece of cord or soft wire and inserting this reinforced edge into the bag frame, riveting the latter in the usual way. (See illustration on Plate 8.)

Frames are frequently fitted to an *inner* bag, and in this case the gussets of the *outer* bag must be slit down the middle to the depth of the shene and inserted in the latter before hammering. Thus, the shene secures the two bags together. This process is clearly illustrated in "Making-up."

Small rings, fixed to the frames as a fastening for handles, are rarely used for this purpose when the bag is an inner one, but they are convenient for attaching decorative plaits and tassels. (See Plate 8.)

COVERING BLOTTERS, ETC. The best foundation for a covering is thin millboard. Strawboard may be used, but it does not produce such strong corners—a very vulnerable point.

Lay the skin, pile-side downwards, upon a table. Cut two pieces of millboard to the size required. Place these on the skin to the best advantage, 1 in. or more apart, the adjacent edges parallel and the tops in the same straight line. When satisfied that the boards are in the correct position, mark round the edges with a soft pencil. Next mark off the allowance for turning over, parallel to the edges of the boards and at a

distance of from $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. to 2 in. (Plate 11.) The skin is next transferred to the cutting board and cut to the outside lines. Care should be taken to hold the straight edge firmly, otherwise the knife, even if only slightly blunted, is apt to drag the leather.

After cutting out, all such decoration as punching or lacing should be completed; but it is better to leave any applique work until the leather is attached to the boards.

The boards should next be pasted on one side. It is advisable to use thick paste, as if thin, it will soak through and stain the leather. Lay the boards carefully on the leather in the positions already marked, and rub down well. Then turn over and rub the leather gently on to the boards. Take great care to avoid stretching.

To prepare the corners for folding, turn the cover so that the boards are uppermost. Between the corner of the leather and the corner of the board mark a point. The distance of this point from the corner of the board should be equal to the thickness of the board. Through this draw a line at an angle of 45° to both edges of the board. Cut off the triangular corner piece thus formed. Repeat at each corner in turn.

Paste the inside of both boards about 2 in. down from the top edge and pull the leather over, rubbing it down thoroughly. Repeat at the bottom. It will be found that the leather on the top and bottom edges projects a little beyond the side edges. Press these projections down well so as to cover the corner of the boards; then paste the boards at the sides and pull the leather over as on the top and bottom edges. If this procedure has been properly carried out, the corners will be square and completely covered, the leather being joined at 45° to the top and side edges.

It now remains to cover that portion of the outer leather which is still visible between the adjacent edges of the boards. Cut a strip of leather 3 in. wide and a little shorter than the height of the cover. Skive the top and bottom edges so that they lie neatly, and paste the strip (velvet side up) to the inside of the back, rubbing down well, so that it adheres to both the leather and the boards.

CLEANING LEATHER. Every possible care should be taken to keep the adhesive used from marking the velvet or suede side of the leather, but if, in spite of all precautions, this should occur, remove it immediately with warm water and a clean rag. In some cases much soaking may be necessary. When thoroughly clean and dry, the pile is restored by rubbing carefully with a piece of fine sand-paper. Suede and similar leathers may also be renovated by rubbing lightly with an ink eraser.

To restore the colour, cleaning balls or liquid cleaner, obtainable at most boot dealers, can be recommended. Care should be taken that the cleaner is of a shade to match the article. If the leather is much soiled, it should first be cleaned with rectified benzine. (This is highly inflammable, and must never be exposed near a naked light.) A weak solution of oxalic acid is effective in removing ink and fruit stains.

Creases may be removed from light leathers by passing over a moderately warm iron held upside down.

All the above processes require infinite care and occupy a considerable amount of time, and it should be borne in mind that *stains, creases, etc., are much more easily avoided than removed.*

CHAPTER VII

STRUCTURAL DESIGN AND MAKING-UP

STRUCTURAL DESIGN. Never, through all the ages, has the craftsman been content with mere mechanical contrivance; always has he endeavoured to beautify his work and imbue it with his personal expression. It is not everyone's lot to be born a designer, but as everyone does possess some artistic taste, more can be done than is usually the case to develop the natural creative instinct.

With paper and scissors, or odd bits of leather, new shapes, new forms of attachment, new fastenings, new forms of handles or straps, etc., may be evolved, and each have their peculiarities developed to the utmost. It is in this way that art will find its scope; more than this, it is in striving continually in this selective direction that whatever artistic powers one may possess will be developed to the full.

Form, use, and decorative quality should be carefully considered when making these experiments. Exaggeration or freakishness must be avoided, remembering that the component parts of an article must form a beautiful or consistent whole.

The examples in the illustrations of shapes and structural forms are given as suggestions for the beginner first to copy and then to improve upon. In the working, new ideas will present themselves, eventually leading to those more "creative" tendencies which make craftsmanship a joy and a pleasure. (Plate 9.)

SERVLETTE RING. Commence by laying out the design on paper. Set out an oblong $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. $\times$ $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. and mark the centre of each of the shorter sides. Draw a centre line passing through these two points. With the middle of the short sides as centre, and radius equal to half the length of the side, i.e. $\frac{3}{4}$ in., describe semicircles outside each end. (See Plate 10.) At $\frac{1}{8}$ in. inside the edge of this figure mark off a line all round to serve as a guide, spacing this out for the centres of the holes for thonging. On the centre line, at $\frac{1}{4}$ in. inwards from one end of the original oblong, mark the centre of the press button spring. From this point mark off another semicircle inwards: this is to indicate the limit beyond which the ornament must not pass. At the other end of the figure mark off a point $\frac{1}{4}$ in. outwards from the short side of the oblong. This indicates the position of the press button.

The next step is to scheme the ornament. In the example shown, the initial is spaced midway between the button and the limiting semicircle. The punched work is then set out. When the whole design has been completed on paper it should be transferred to the smooth side of the leather through carbon paper.

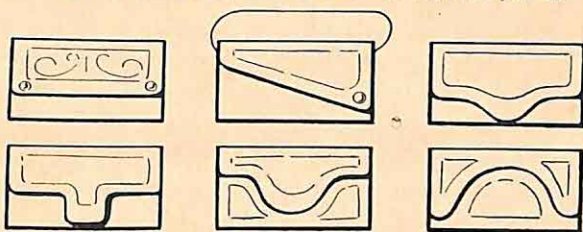
First cut out the outline, using scissors for the rounded ends, then carefully cut out the initial. The holes for thonging are punched last.

Fix the press button spring in position on the velvet side of the leather, and mark, also on the velvet side, by punching a small hole, the position of the cap.

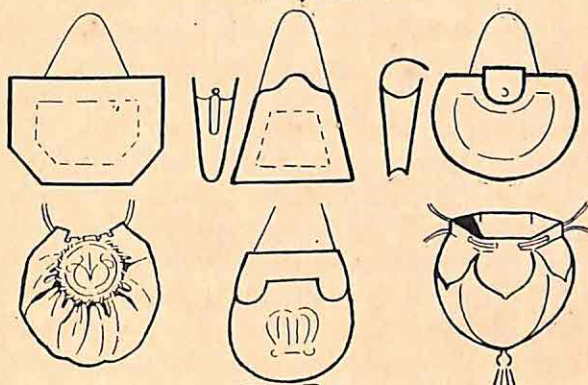
Cut out, by means of the paper pattern, the same shape from a second skin that harmonizes with the first. Paste the smooth side of the decorated leather and lay it carefully in position on the smooth side of the lining

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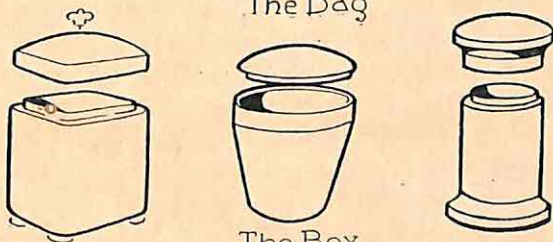
STRUCTURAL DESIGN.



The Pochette.



The Bag



The Box.

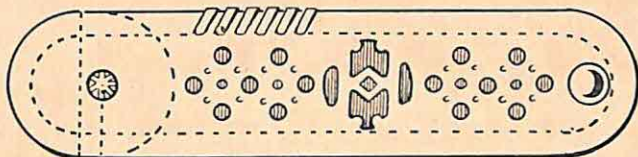
Plate 9

piece, pressing the two well together. When quite dry, trim up the edges if required and thread the thongs. Commence the thonging in the middle of the oblong, leaving a loose end which is to be neatly spliced to the other end of the thong when the circuit is completed. Fix the press button cap and finish off by gently hammering the thonging, if required, to make it lie neatly.

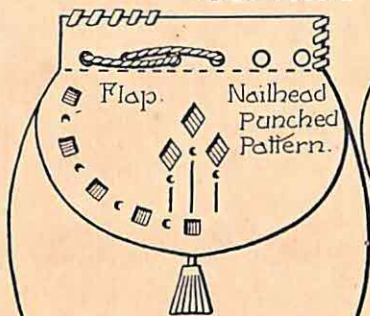
COVERING A SMALL MIRROR. Small circular mirrors suitable for this purpose are easily obtainable at most fancy-ware shops. Three pieces of leather will be required for the casing. The first should be $\frac{1}{2}$ in. greater in diameter than the mirror; the second being the same size as the first, but with the centre cut out to within $\frac{1}{2}$ in. of the edge. Mark off the larger diameters with the compasses on the back of the leather, and proceed to cut out. On one of the discs, using the same centre, mark off an inner circle, $\frac{1}{2}$ in. from the edge. Cut the centre out very neatly, as any error will be magnified by the mirror over which it is to be placed. The third is a piece $\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide and of sufficient length to equal the distance round the outer edge of the leather discs. This is for binding before thonging.

We now proceed to decorate the solid piece of leather. This can be done by using either a punched, laced, or pierced pattern. An example is given in the illustration.

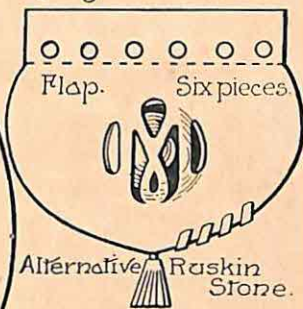
To make up, apply a little adhesive to the back of the mirror and lay it centrally on the solid piece of leather. Paste the ring of leather and lay this over the mirror so that the outer edges coincide with the outer edges of the solid piece. Press together firmly and evenly, and allow to dry. Paste the narrow



Serviette Ring.



Six pieces required



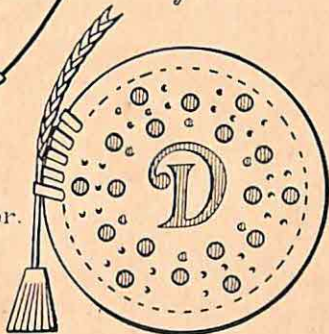
Alternative Raskin Stone.

Lady's Work-bag.

Alternative for Mirror.



Raskin Stone



Mirror.

strip and place it over the two edges of the circular leathers so that half of the width goes to the back and half to the front. (See Fig. 8, Plate 4.) When dry proceed to punch the holes for thonging. One of the best ways of evenly spacing these holes is to punch at the "quarters" first. Divide the quarter into half and punch, and so on, until the holes are considered to be close enough together. The "nib" of the punch should just touch the edge of the glass when making the holes.

Thong with either calf or Persian velvet. A handle can be made and attached so that the mirror can be hung, by plaiting three thongs and adding tassels to the ends. These are fixed to the mirror when thonging, as shown. (Fig. 2, Plate 10.)

MAKING-UP A LADY'S WORK BAG. Paper patterns should first be cut to the shape and size shown in diagram (Plate 10). These can then be placed on the leather and the latter cut to the best advantage.

Any decoration intended must be done before making-up the bag.

The work is started by applying adhesive lightly to the edges of the separate pieces and pressing them together until they adhere firmly. This holds the leather in position whilst the thonging holes are being pierced. Another method is to secure the edges by means of wire paper fasteners. Still another method is to place the two leathers correctly together, and pierce a few holes. Thong this portion with string or cord, to hold the leather in position while proceeding with the punching. The article may be completed in this manner. When the string is replaced by leather thongs, it is gradually unlaced, as the thonging

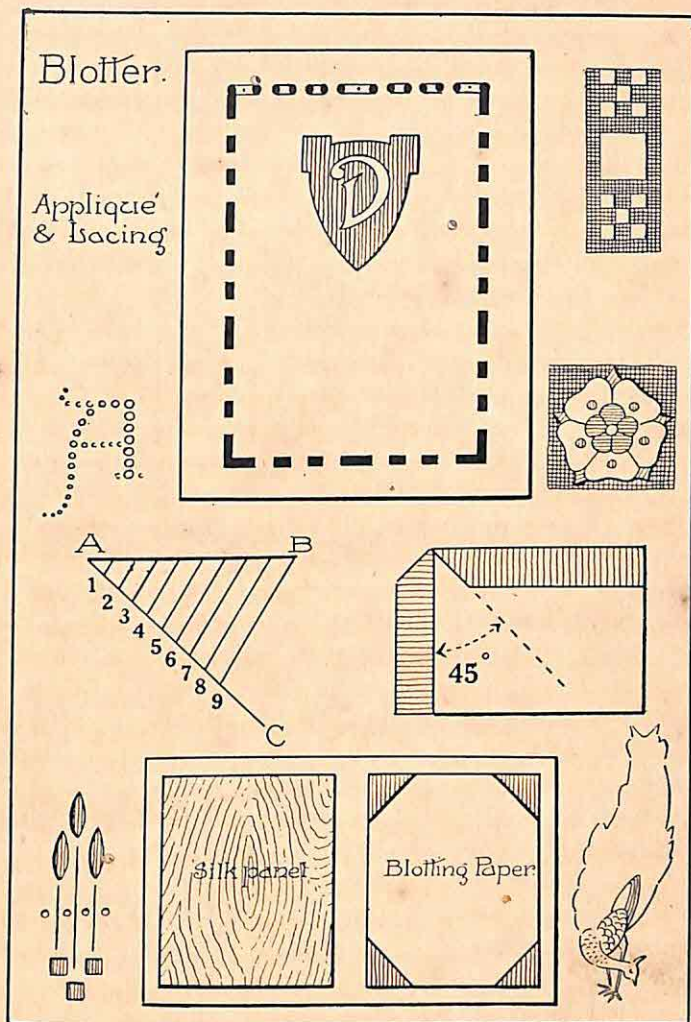


Plate 11

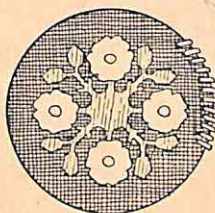
proceeds. Pass the thong through a hole from back to front, drawing it through until about 2 in. remain. Carry the thong to the edge, and loop it with the end, to form a knot. Now take the thong along the edge to the next hole, pass it through the hole, and back to the edge to form a second loop. Continue thus along the entire edge to be thonged. Care should be taken to see that the thongs lie evenly. (See Fig. 8, Plate 5.) The handles, each of which consists of two pieces thonged together, are fitted between the flaps and the side pieces when putting the bag together, the thonging holes being punched through the flap, handle, and side with the same operation. The holes for the silk drawing cord are punched through the flap and side. If a lining is required, it must be made in a similar manner to the bag and inserted before punching the holes along the top.

In thonging, allowance must be made at the bottom of each flap for the tassel. This can be done by thonging through a hole twice, leaving a loop of thong, and thonging through the next hole twice. The tassel is wound round the loop thus left. If the thonging is taken from top to bottom of the bag, the ends can be utilized for the lower tassel, care being taken to thread the thong through the last hole twice.

The two silk cords are threaded through the holes made for them in opposite directions; their ends are knotted together with sufficient left to make a tassel.

A BLOTTER. The method of cutting the boards and covering the same with leather has already been described. It should be remembered, however, that punched or laced patterns should be worked previous to the covering process. Prepare a drawing on paper

SOFT, LEATHERWORK



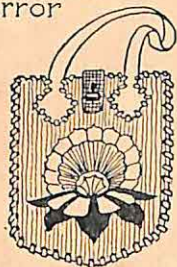
Mirror



Bookmark.



Cushion



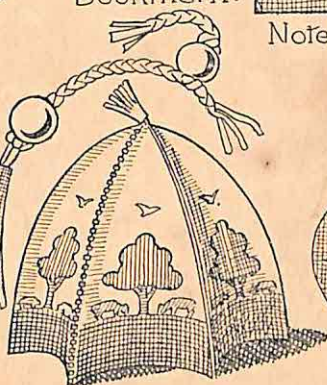
Bag



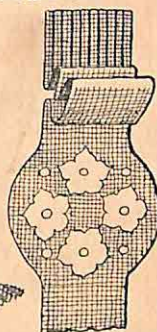
Notebook



Comb-case.



Tea-cosy



Runner.

of the pattern, and trace this on to the leather. To set out the design, draw an oblong 9 in. $\times$ 7 in. and mark off a line at a distance of 1 in. all round and inside, to mark the outer edge of the lacing. Inside this draw a further line to show the thickness of the thong or lace. For the lace-holes seventeen equal spaces are required in the short side and twenty-four in the long. The division may be quickly made by the geometrical method. On a spare sheet of paper draw a line *AB* of the same length as the side it is required to divide. From the point "*A*," draw a line *AC* at any convenient angle. Starting from "*A*," divide off the line *AC* into the required number of equal divisions. The size of these divisions is not important, but for convenience they may be made $\frac{1}{4}$ in. The length of *AC* is immaterial. In the diagram (Plate 11) nine divisions are illustrated. The last division is joined to point "*B*," then draw lines parallel to "*B-9*" through each of the other numbered points. Where these lines cut *AB* they divide it into the required equal parts. Transfer these divisions to the pattern drawing, which is then traced through carbon paper on to the smooth side of the leather.

The "dot and dash" pattern of the lacing is obtained by arranging the punching in the following manner. Make a hole at the end of the line, miss the 1st mark but punch the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th, miss the 8th, punch the 9th, and so on. (If an equally-spaced dot pattern is selected, an odd number of spaces will be required to give a dot at each end of the line.)

After threading the thong, stick down the skived ends at the back of the leather.

The case may now be made up in the manner already



Plate 13

described, the lacing being hammered down gently while the cover is still damp, and then left to dry.

Choose the letter to be used for the decoration of the cover, and after tracing on to a suitable piece of leather, carefully cut out and pare the edges ready for pasting in position later.

Both sides of the blotter require to be lined, one with silk, and the other with white card. This is to take the leather corners carrying the blotting paper.

For the silk panel, cut a piece of stiff paper 6 in. $\times$ 8 in., over which the silk should be strained and the edges pasted down at the back. The panel is then ready to be pasted in the blotter.

The white card should also be 6 in. $\times$ 8 in. Two pieces of leather, each 2 in. square, are required for the corners. These are cut across diagonally, making four triangles, one for each corner. Lay the card on the table: slip the leather triangles under the corners, smooth side up, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ in. of leather projecting beyond each of the edges. (See Plate 11.) Cut and paste the leather as described in chapter on "Covering." Paste the card into the blotter and press the whole under a weight. When dry, paste the applique centre in position on the front and press.

Lastly, with a single ring punch, work a lightly impressed pattern all round the leather inside, just outside the edges of the silk and card panels.

The blotter is now complete.

CHAPTER VIII

MODELLED LEATHER DESIGN

DESIGN. Prior experience in modelling with clay (or plasticene) will be found a useful introduction to modelling in leather, but in all cases, whether the previous modelling experience be much or little, it is strongly recommended that before commencing to work a design on leather, it is first worked in one of these plastic media. The method of overcoming difficulties or avoiding mistakes will be found, and errors guarded against which could not be rectified if made on the leather.

It is also wise to practise with the modelling tool, working out leaves, flowers, etc., on odd bits of leather. In this way you will learn to appreciate both the possibilities and the limitations of the art.

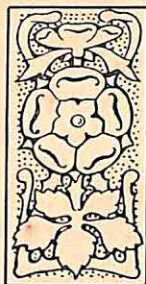
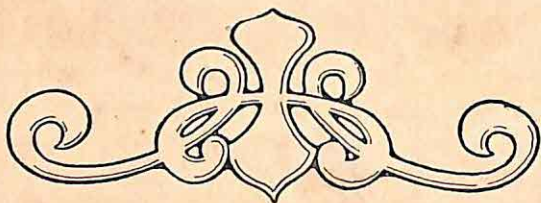
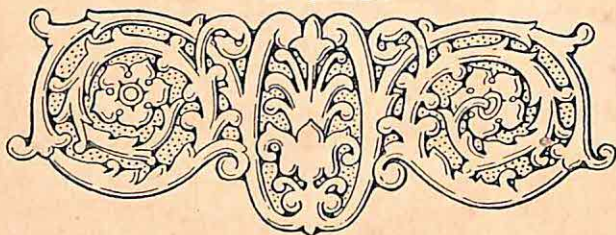
As design is usually by far the weakest side of modelled or any other leatherwork, it will not be amiss at this point to describe as briefly as possible what design really consists of in relation to the work in hand.

There are three *classes* into which ornamental art can be divided, namely, the *aesthetic*; the *symbolic*; and the *mnemonic*.

In the *aesthetic* (Plate 14) we use objects whose sole aim is in pleasing the sense of vision; therefore the objects selected are chosen for their beauty of form or for infusing interest into a composition.

The *symbolic* (Plate 16) and *mnemonic* (Plate 20) classes are very distinct in character from the *aesthetic*, but are nearly allied to one another.

ÆSTHETIC ELEMENTS.

Convention
PanelsFor Pochette
Invention

For Bag



Plate 15

The symbolic employs objects to set forth an idea indicating a virtue or an office. One of the commonest forms of this class is the "emblem." The rose symbolizes England, as the lion symbolizes English might. The thistle or shamrock embodied in a design would indicate, or call to mind, either Scotland or Ireland, so that in designing, if we want to call attention to these countries, we can best do so by using their symbols as elements.

The lyre typifies a general idea of music. Used as an element in a design for a modelled leather music case, it would help considerably in connecting up the ornament with the ornamented. Examples of this class of ornament are numberless; to give but a few—we have the owl, typifying wisdom; pansies, thought; rosemary, remembrance; upright torch, life; a cross, Christianity, etc.

In both aesthetic and symbolic classes, the ornament is conventionalized: rarely are realistic objects used. In the decoration of bags, boxes, blotters, and other articles that are subject to handling, conventional ornament should always be used. The realistic treatment of bunches of grapes, apples, etc., in articles such as these is obviously not in accordance with the principle of handling or good ornament. Conventional natural forms are governed by principles deduced from Nature herself, and it is by the use of these that the success of the modelling is assured.

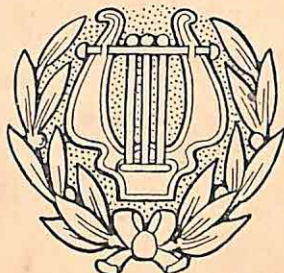
Briefly enumerated, the main principles are—

Growth. In the main design, due consideration is given to the growth of the plant, a tall plant or natural form being used for a long panel and vice versa. A trailing plant is best adapted in horizontal borders.

SYMBOLIC ELEMENTS.



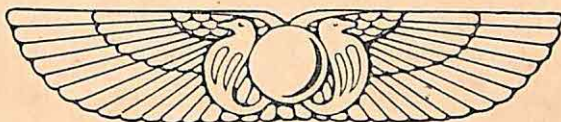
Crafts



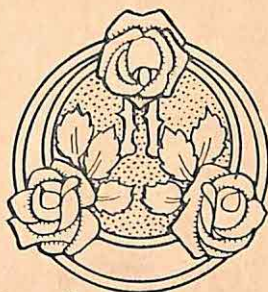
Music.



Life.



Asps - Wisdom Divinity. Wings - Sovereignty.



England.

Although conforming to conventional treatment, the plant should not be twisted into lines at variance with its natural growth. In the detail, consideration must be given to the narrowing of the stems as they reach their upper extremity. Leaves, also, grow towards the top of the plant. Branches, flowers, and fruit occur in certain positions. These and other characteristics peculiar to the plant or other natural forms should be studied, to enable a more intelligent rendering to be given to the conventional treatment.

RADIATION. The radiation and proper jointing of stalks and leaves, of small veins to the larger, of feathers to wings, petals to calyx, etc. Joints are, perhaps, the worst stumbling block to the beginner, and much otherwise good work is spoiled by the clumsy treatment of these important details.

BALANCE. The design as a whole should be well balanced. One way of gaining this is by making it *symmetrical*, that is to say, the ornament is similar on both sides of a centre line. *Even distribution of weight in detail*, although unsymmetrical, will help to provide us with this necessary principle.

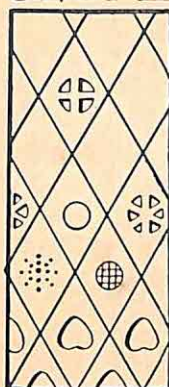
As a principle of good ornament, stems should always cross as nearly as possible at right angles.

To attain to excellence, the student should be acquainted with at least the elementary principles of ornament, whether for copying or designing, and he cannot do better than to study a good book on the subject.

Various treatments of conventional designs for different articles are given in Plates 14, 15, 16, and 23.

SIMPLE GEOMETRICAL ORNAMENT. (Plate 17.) Very effective ornament is obtained by panelling the desired

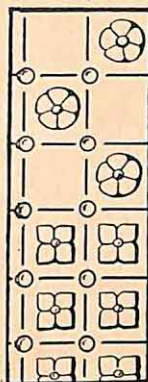
GEOMETRICAL ELEMENTS.



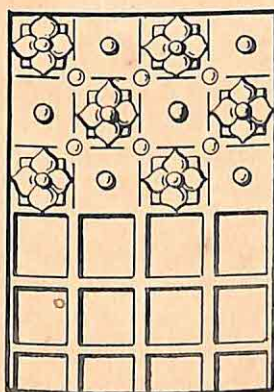
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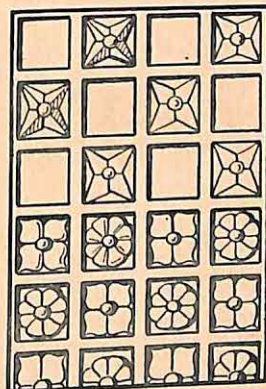
Units formed by
filing nail-heads



2



3



4

Plate 17

space by intersecting lines forming squares or diamonds (Figs. 1 and 2). See also Plate 18. A modelled unit is worked in alternate panels, or they can be enriched by means of simple stamps, the making of which from nail heads, etc., has been described. On Plate 17 is shown a number of small patterns derived from units formed by filing nail-heads. These easily-made punches can be used with advantage on soft or modelling leathers. In the soft the grain side is used for the patterning, the leather being placed on a piece of strawboard while punching. With a little ingenuity a number of delightful patterns can be formed in this way suitable for small articles, such as bookmarkers, mirrors, etc.

An elaboration of Fig. 1 is shown in Fig. 4. Here the lines forming the panels, instead of being sunk are raised. The first are easily ruled straight on to the leather, the latter are better drawn and traced.

Small similar patterns can be modelled or punched in each panel, or a series of two alternated (Figs. 2 and 4.)

Very effective designs of a freer type, suitable for pochettes, purses, etc., can be formed by the use of the more elaborate matting punches, such as the leaf, bunches of leaves, and flowers. Used in combination with the straight or curved line, such patterns as conventional trees, bushes, flowing borders, and "all over" patterns can be produced quite easily. By the use of an inked pad, impressions can first be transferred to paper, thus making certain that the pattern is workable.

Basil is the leather used. This opens up a field of inexpensive small articles, besides forming an interesting and useful introduction to original design. The basil can be stained or left natural. There is much to

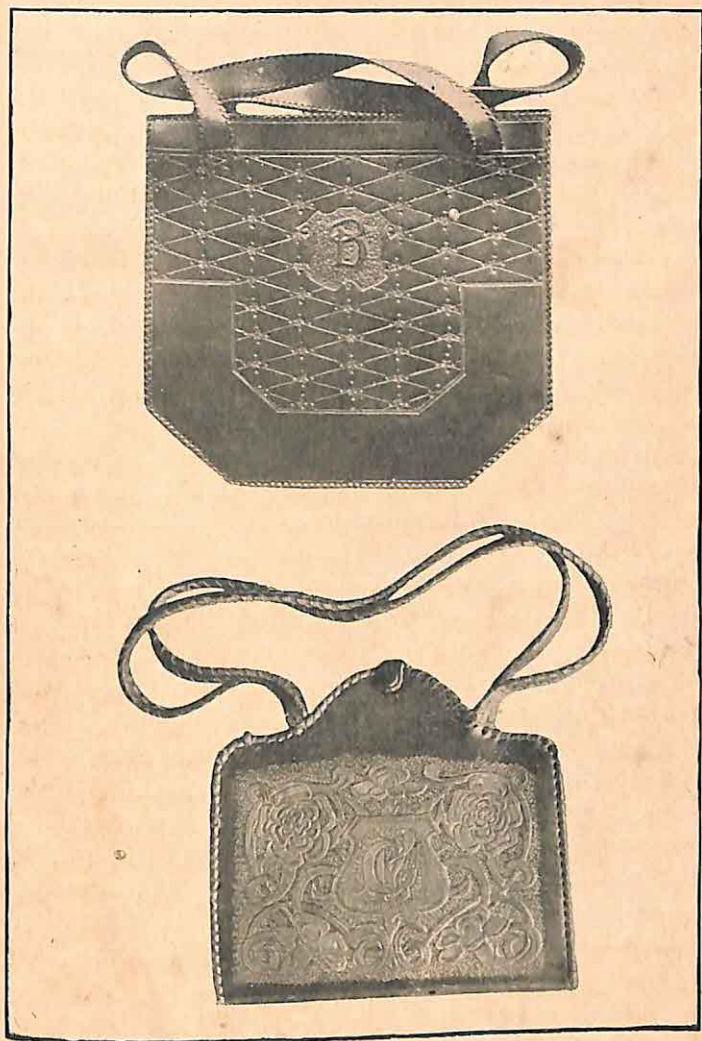


Plate 18

be said for the latter ; its delightfully soft shade, rather like old ivory, being very charming.

Broad modelled designs can also be worked on basil. The backgrounds in this case are punched down with an "all over" pattern, leaving the design standing free, to be worked up with the broad modeller. The design can be stained, leaving the background the natural colour, or vice versa.

STRAPWORK. *Plate 19.* This class of ornament, more than any other, attunes itself to the decorative qualities of thonging. Where a distinct contrast is not desired the combination is decidedly pleasing as an harmonious whole. For the beginner, too, the straight lined varieties form an easy motif, as much can be done with a wooden ruler in outlining when sinking the background. A knowledge of geometry is a distinct aid, even when copying, and, of course, is far more essential when evolving the patterns oneself. In the simpler forms many pleasing designs for border, corners, and panels may be evolved with the aid of squared paper. The manner of setting out is shown in the border given in the illustration. The box top (see *Plate 19*) has been drawn entirely with the compasses. Here, again, there is scope for experiment, always bearing in mind that the ornament should be evenly distributed over the space to be filled. In the frontispiece an example is given of the free type of strapwork, adapted from the art of Scandinavia. This art, together with the Celtic, abounds in many beautiful examples. In modelling, the "under" strap is gradually sunk for a short distance on either side of the "upper." In the larger patterns the width of the strap may be fluted as suggested in the box top. (See illustration.)"

STRAPWORK

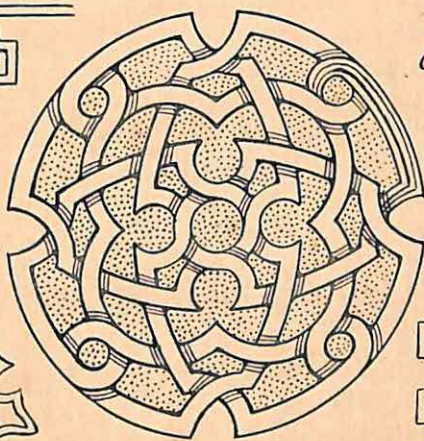
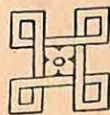
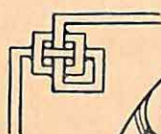
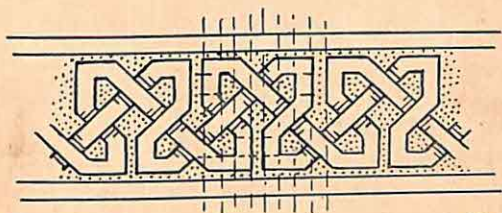


Plate 19

MNEMONIC ORNAMENT. (*Plate 20.*) This ornament, as the word implies, is adapted for the purpose of aiding the memory in recalling facts or events. Written inscriptions, *ornamentally* treated, are mnemonic.

MONOGRAMS. One of the easiest forms, and one which can be applied to nearly every article in modelled leather, is the monogram. Beyond being of a very highly decorative character, its use as ornament gives a very personal touch to the object adorned. The following hints will assist in overcoming difficulties in practical application.

General Principles. The general principles are as follows—

1. Every letter must be well formed and legible.
2. The complete monogram should be a pleasing piece of decoration.
3. An artistic effect cannot be hoped for unless all the letters are in the same style.
4. The initial of the surname must be made the most conspicuous letter. This object can be achieved by means of size and position.
5. Although most alphabets can be used, a careful choice to suit the material and manner of application is imperative; it will be evident that the delicate serif in Fig. 5 is not so suitable for modelling as the more rounded forms in Fig. 11.

Form. The setting out of simple monograms is illustrated in Figs. 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. These will be seen to conform to the foregoing general principles, and attention is also particularly drawn to the balancing of the letters. This is an important feature. The system of interlacing should also be noted; the letters, as a rule, running alternately under and over. If desired, they

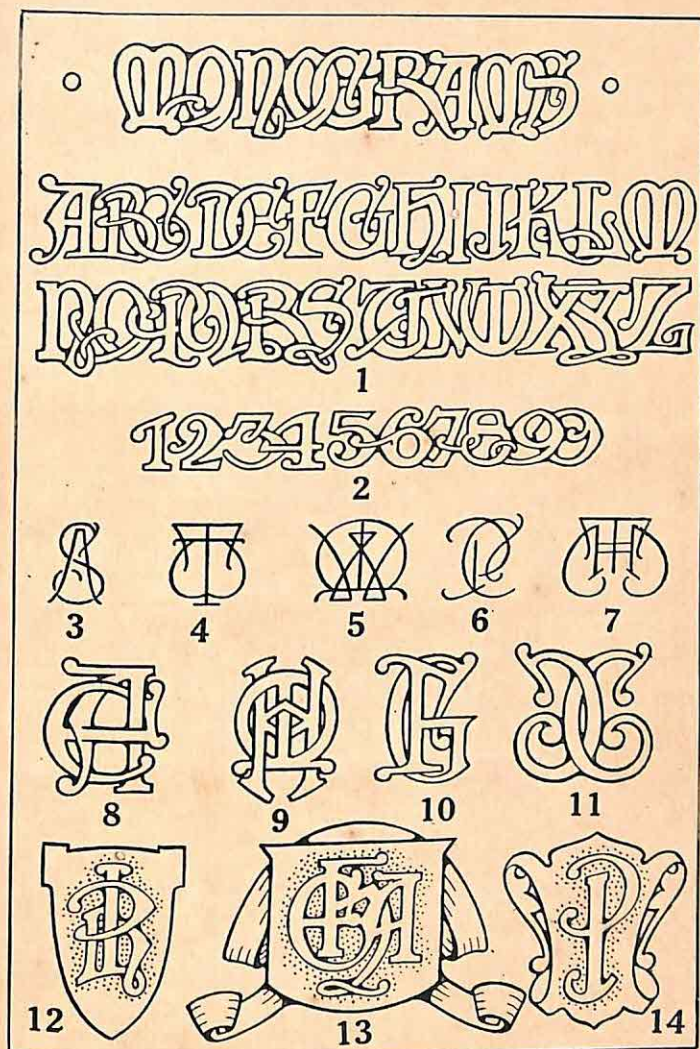


Plate 20

may be tied (Fig. 10) instead of interlaced (Figs. 8 and 9); they need not be of uniform size—it will usually be found advantageous to lengthen some and widen others in the same group. (Fig. 9.)

Figs. 12, 13, and 14 show monograms designed to occupy a given space. In such cases it is important to secure the happiest relation between the allotted shape and the proportions of the letters; the latter must not be too large or too small, but, as already stated in the general principles, certain liberties may legitimately be taken with the shapes. Any extension of the extremities must, however, be thin, so that the features of the letter are not distorted.

A pleasing type of monogram, known as the “cypher,” is formed by reversing letters and interlacing them as in Fig. 11.

In staining, the monograms can be still further emphasized by keeping them light against a dark background.

The Lettered Inscription. As a border, this form of decoration has very few equals. It is never very easy to find a quotation with just the right number of words, but if apt, it is worth while, for it gives an added charm to the article.

In the example given in Plate 1 the title has been used as a decoration for the border of a book cover.

FIGURE. The human figure is the noblest of the elements with which we have to deal as craftsmen, and it is, at the same time, the most difficult to treat. The interest given by the human figure to any form of decoration, despite this difficulty, is so great, that the study of it must of necessity raise the general character of the lower elements associated with it. In adapting

FIGURE.

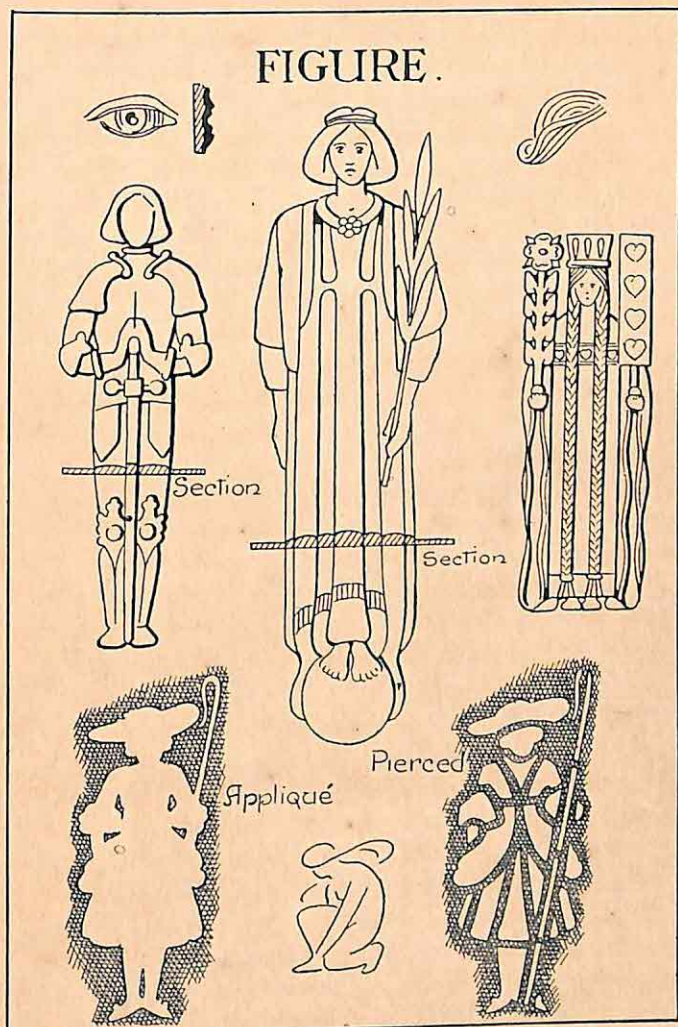


Plate 21

figures to design, the utmost should be made of the ornamental lines to be found in their structure. Beyond this the figure should be an integral part of the composition and flow with the shape of the space to be filled. It is not enough to merely give a "pictorial" or realistic rendering, for such treatment hardly comes under the heading of "decoration." Costume, too, lends itself admirably to the harmonious lines of decorative composition. Both figure and costume should therefore be studied from an ornamental point of view if the student wishes to become at all successful in their use as decoration. The limitations of the material in which we are working has its effect on the figure also. This is shown in the figure of a shepherdess in Plate 21. Where it has been used for applique leatherwork the decorative qualities of the outline have been made the most of and sufficient detail given to create interest in the silhouette. In direct contrast is the same figure as applied to pierced leatherwork. Here the necessity of "ties" forces us to make use of the interior lines of the dress. The figure, as a whole, has also been simplified to render it more adaptable to the process. The treatment is similar to that of a stencil.

In modelled leather the figure is much to be preferred when kept as simple as possible, both as regards detail and modelling. The examples given in Plates 21 and 22 show how much can be done with the simplest of lines as contours, while the sections demonstrate a similar treatment of the various planes of the surface modelling. A little more work can be put into the details, such as the features, hair, hands, and feet, thus forming a gentle contrast which adds to the decorative



Plate 22

qualities of the whole. Treat the figure as a whole and do not work up one part at the expense of another. With the figure in action the student should give the continuity of graceful line on which the unity of the composition of the form depends. Draperies and other accessories should aid this decorative tendency.

When the figure is small, a blunt needle can be used with advantage in modelling the features, hands, and hair. These should be worked under various lighting conditions to ensure the correct modelling of planes. The leather should only be slightly damped so that it gives greater resistance to the tool, thus enabling the worker to gain cleaner definition.

The figures in the long panels on Plate 22 are the Patron Saints of Ireland and Scotland symbolized as soldiers of Christ. Beneath the figures are the national emblems of the respective countries. The figure in the top central panel is the Virgin, while that underneath has been taken from a cover for "Indian Love."

CHAPTER IX

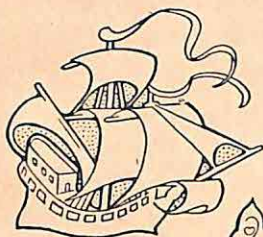
TRANSFERRING—SINKING—MATTING—MODELLING— STAINING—SLOTING—SKIVING

TRANSFERRING THE DESIGN. The design should not be traced directly on the leather. It is better to trace it first on a piece of stout tracing paper so that the original may be kept for future use if required.

Damp the leather *all over*. If only a small patch is damped at a time the edges dry and leave a stain. Set the tracing accurately over the damped leather and pin it down beyond the edges. Carbon paper is not used on modelling leather. With a hard (H) pencil, trace the design through on to the leather evenly and firmly. The tracing paper should be occasionally lifted very carefully to see that the whole of the lines are being traced. The impression on the leather should be clear without being deep enough to interfere with future modelling. The tracing finished, transfer to the cutting board ready for modelling.

SINKING THE BACKGROUND. Moisten the work with the sponge (this may now be confined to the design), and using the broad end of the double-ended modeller press the leather firmly down all round the outlines of the ornament. Do not go quite up to the outline at first—you will obtain better results by cleaning it up after the mass of the background has been sunk. The handle of the tool must be in advance of the point, and directed *along* the line to be followed. (The correct hold may be obtained by drawing a line with a pen inclined across the first finger, keeping the breadth of

DECORATIVE DETAILS



Flight of Time



Sea horse



Swastika



For Appliqué



Happiness.



Chinese symbol



Dolphin

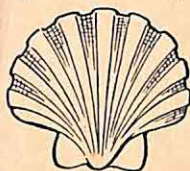
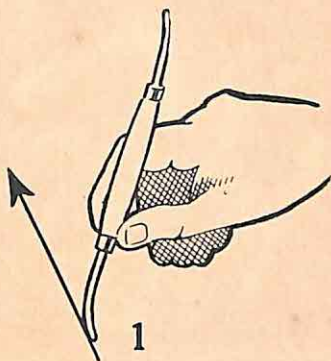


Plate 23

the nib at right angles to the line.) (Fig. 1.) It will be necessary to turn the work continually, and the leather should be moistened as often as necessary. It is not possible to work dry leather, but, on the other hand, it should never be soaked.

When the outlines enclosing a space have been treated, the space itself is to be pressed down evenly by a *side* movement of the tool (which is *now* held as if



sketching with a pencil). (Fig. 2.) It is best to go over every part twice, to gain depth and a more accurate outline. The greater depth gives better opportunity for modelling the raised portions.

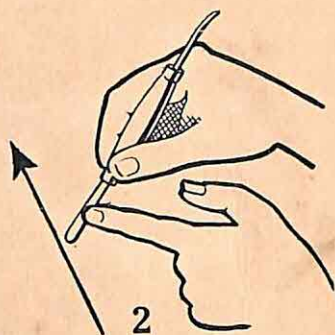
Repeat these processes until the whole background is finished.

MATTING THE BACKGROUND. In order to give greater contrast, the background, after being sunk, is either "pricked" or matted with a punch.

"Pricking" is obtained by stabbing lightly with a large needle or similar instrument. This forms an effective background for small designs or in small spaces where a punch cannot be used. (Fig. 2, Plate 25)

When using the matting punch, hold the tool vertically and tap it lightly with the hammer. First follow round the outline, and then fill in, taking care that the impressions do not overlap each other. (Fig. 5, Plate 25.)

Again, it is necessary to repeat the caution—never allow a steel tool to rest on modelling leather or it will produce a stain. It is also well to remember that this



leather is prepared to receive and retain impressions, and can be indented by the pressure of even a finger nail. You are not likely to spoil more than one piece of work in this way—but why spoil any?

MODELLING THE ORNAMENT. When the background has been sunk and matted, the ornament is ready for modelling.

In the realistic treatment the modelling of the details is copied from the natural forms. This method should not be carried too far; only the main details or those which accentuate the beauty of the form should be used. Overmodelled ornament is no longer a design but a picture.

Using the broad end of the Dresden tool, and keeping

the leather moist, gently press the surface to obtain the undulations of the modelling, and remember that you are *drawing* with a tool. Veins of leaves are obtained by depressing the leather on either side (Fig. 1, Plate 24) so that the veins stand out. They should generally be kept rather fine. Serrations on the edge of a leaf can best be made by pressing the fine end of the tool (or the broad end if required) straight down, and then withdrawing it horizontally away from the leaf. (Fig. 2, Plate 24.) Where one leaf passes under another the portion of the under leaf adjacent to the upper is slightly sunk. Crossed stems are treated likewise. (Figs. 3 and 4.) The curling petals of a flower are sunk where required and rounded over. Stamens can be produced with the aid of a ring punch. (Fig. 5.) Fruit and berries have their edges rounded off, leaving the centre raised. (Figs. 6 and 8.)

Conventional treatment is superior to realistic in giving more scope for spirit, symbolism, originality—in a word—for art.

Fig. 2, Plate 25, illustrates a modern conventional design comprising leaves, stalks, and flowers. Note how the edges are raised round the forms in Fig. 7.

Fig. 4 is another group of conventions, designed to capture a historic spirit in the treatment of vine and grapes in detail. Note the crossings and the rounding of the fruit.

In the original of Fig. 1 the name is raised, but the beginner may find it easier to sink lettering of this kind.

When a piece of ornament is isolated it is only necessary to carry the sinking of the surrounding leather far enough to throw the design in relief. This

is especially emphasized in Fig. 6, Plate 25, for the purpose of illustration, but should not be so obvious in any finished work.

Fig. 5, Plate 25, has been chosen for the background. This is a pattern impressed by a special punch (of which a large variety can be had), being in turn surrounded by pricking.

Fig. 3, Plate 25, shows a pattern produced by means of a ring punch.

STAINING. The leather should first be cleaned to remove any slight marks that may have occurred during modelling. For this purpose use a wad of cotton wool dipped in a little rectified benzine or methylated spirit, rubbing the surface gently all over.

Next prepare the stain by diluting the concentrated liquid which you have already bottled by adding methylated spirit until it is a little lighter than the tone required. It is advisable for a beginner to obtain the desired tone by applying two or three washes rather than by attempting to get this by a single wash. The reason for this is that spirit stain "strikes" very quickly and a streaky effect is almost certain to be produced until practice has been gained. However, owing to the tendency for methylated spirit to harden the leather the number of washes should gradually be reduced as the necessary skill in staining is acquired.

To obtain "antique" colouring, mix nut-brown stain with a little blue.

The background should be stained first. For large washes the work should be slightly tilted by laying on a piece of millboard raised at one end. Use a large camel-hair mop and wash on the stain quickly and as evenly as possible. It is important to see that the brush

MODELLING

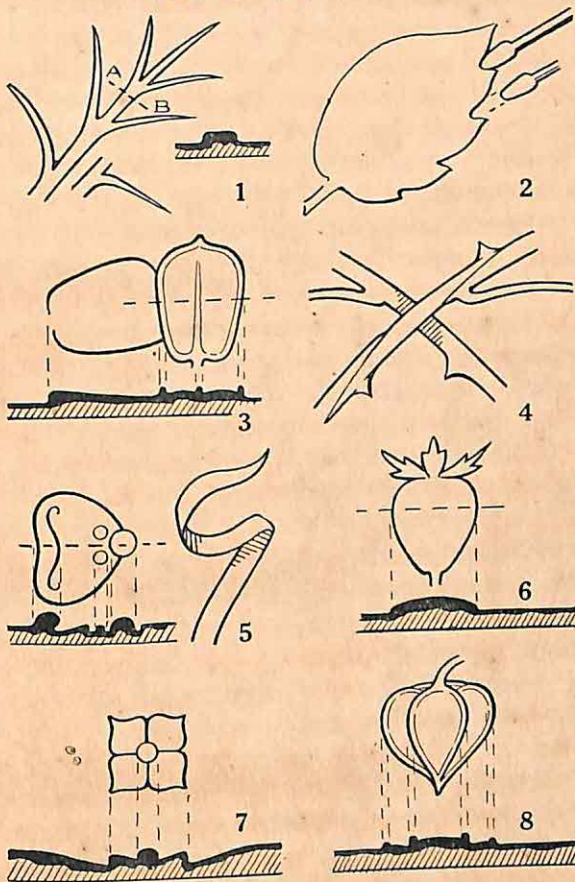


Plate 24

is not too full, otherwise the stain may run down the leather and leave ugly lines. The process is similar to applying a wash in water-colour painting.

The second wash should be applied whilst the leather is still damp (but not wet), and the procedure repeated until the desired tone is obtained. A dark even tone can usually be obtained without much difficulty, but some little practice will be required before light, even shades can be produced. The smaller spaces between the ornament, which could not be conveniently given several washes, can be brought to the right shade by using a darker stain once only.

The ornament should be stained last, so as to obtain the desired contrast with the background.

As an alternative to the "antique" staining, the work may be coloured either in monotonous (different shades of the same colour, produced by diluting the stain) or conventional tones, but no attempt should be made to obtain realistic colouring. The colour scheme should be designed and fully considered before the staining is commenced.

Shading should be done whilst the work is still damp. Should the colour be too bright or crude, it may be softened by a very thin wash of background stain over all. If too dark it should be wiped gently with cotton wool dipped in a little methylated spirit, but should *not be scrubbed*.

Where the article is to be of one colour only, an alternative method of staining is in the use of wads of cotton wool dipped in the stain and applied to the leather with a circular motion, covering it in this manner from one end to the other. Use two or three washes, gradually working up to the tone required.

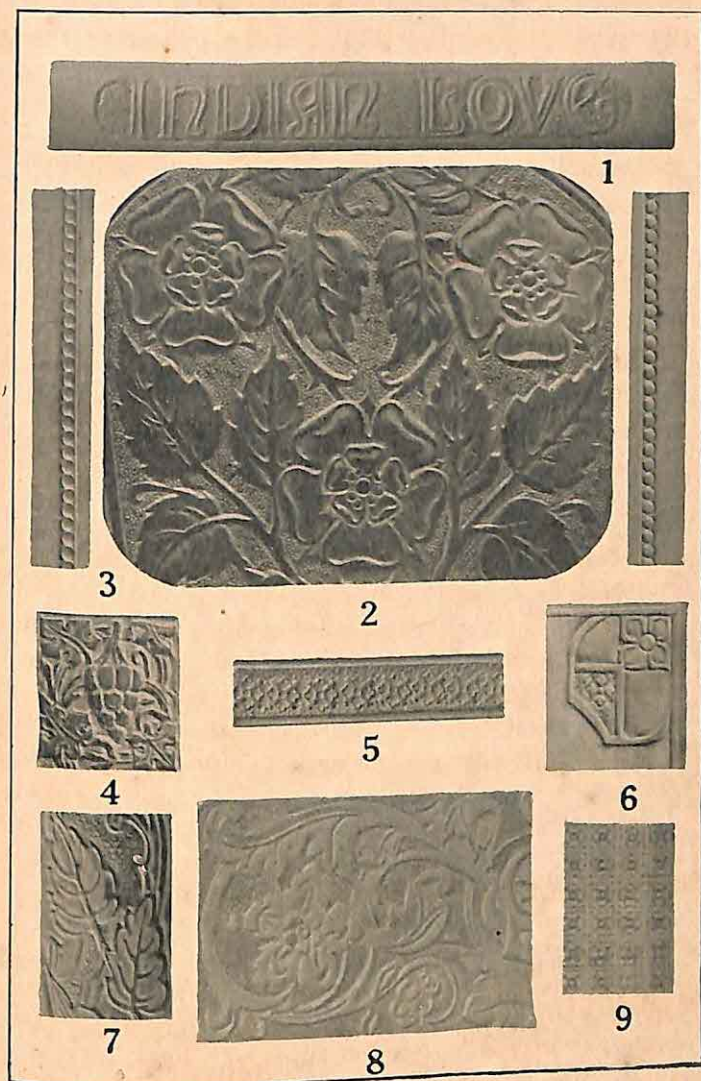


Plate 25

In this method, more than ever, the work should not be *scrubbed*. It is obvious that during this process rubber tips or gloves must be used to protect the hands.

A beautiful finish may be obtained by polishing gently with cotton wool.

SLOTING FOR THONGS. In order that the thongs may lie flat in the thick modelling leather they are threaded through slots made by using a "prong." (Fig. 3, Plate 2.) This tool is supplied in widths to suit the size of the thongs. It is used in a similar manner to the stitch tool, i.e. the first of the prongs is inserted in the last existing hole, to ensure even spacing. Slotting at rounded corners is a little difficult, and it is advisable to practise on scraps or cuttings.

After slotting, if the work is not to be skived, remove the corner with an edge shave all round the rough side of the leather.

SKIVING. For covering a box or similar article, it is necessary to skive the edges of the leather. Lay the work, smooth side down, on a hard surface (glass is best, but in any case *not* iron or steel), and, cutting away from you, pare the rough side to a fine edge. You will at once appreciate the necessity for using a sharp and flexible knife. Skiving is usually about 1 in. wide, and the surface produced is a plain bevel. A much greater width can be obtained if required, or the leather may be hollowed out until very thin. This, for instance, is very necessary when covering the upper edge of the base of a box, upon which the lid is to fit. (Plate 29.)

CHAPTER X

HANDLES

HANDLES FOR BAGS, ETC. The essential points of a handle are that it shall be strong and firm ; comfortable to hold, and that it should form an integral part of the structural design. Examples are given of several varieties, from which, by modification or additions, quite a number of others may be evolved.

HANDLE SUITABLE FOR POCLETTE. Three pieces of calf are used for this, of the shape shown in the diagram. The handle proper is lined with Persian velvet or skiver, and thonged. If left plain it is liable to become limp with constant use. The two smaller pieces, which can be of any shape, which conforms to the general idea or design of the bag, are decoratively thonged in position. (Fig. 1, Plate 26.)

THE RADIATING STRIP HANDLE. Several strips of calf tapering from about $\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide, and a large ivorine ring are required to make this handle. The strips are made to the length desired, and are skivered down for a distance of 1 in. at one end. This end is taken through the ring in each case and the skived end brought into contact with the back of the strip and made fast with adhesive. Starting at about 1 in. from the other end of the strip, both sides are punched or slotted for thonging, right up to the ring, thus securing the strips to the ring. The strips can be left plain, if desired, in which case they are made secure under the ring, by a little decorative thonging. (Fig. 2, Plate 26.)

In soft leather, the strips are treated in a similar way.

The free ends of the strip are taken through slots equally spaced in the back of the bag, brought through to the inside, and decoratively thonged to the bag.

THE WOVEN HANDLE. The materials required will be a length of stout cord, such as is commonly used for a clothes line, and a number of thongs. The thongs are laid edge to edge right round one end of the cord and made fast with a strong thread. If this end be suspended, the thongs will hang parallel and entirely cover the cord.

An additional thong is taken, and beginning at the bound end, is wrapped round and round the cord, at the same time weaving it over and under the alternate parallel thongs. (Fig. 3, Plate 26.) Care should be taken to keep the thongs attached to the cord quite straight, and the wrapping or weaving should be tightened up with each round.

The work of making this handle may be facilitated by suspending the cord from the bound end, by means of a piece of string, to a hook.

The weaving finished, the end must be made secure as at the beginning.

To fasten the handle to the bag, two forms of tabs can be used. The first is cut to the shape illustrated in Fig. 5. The two ears "A" and "B" are wrapped round the end of the handle and secured strongly and neatly by stitching with thread. The tab is decoratively thonged to the bag.

In the second method, where it is desired to attach the handle to the bag by rings, the tabs are cut as shown in Fig. 5c., and attached in the same manner as method 1.

THE PLAITED HANDLE. A small tubular handle may

HANDLES

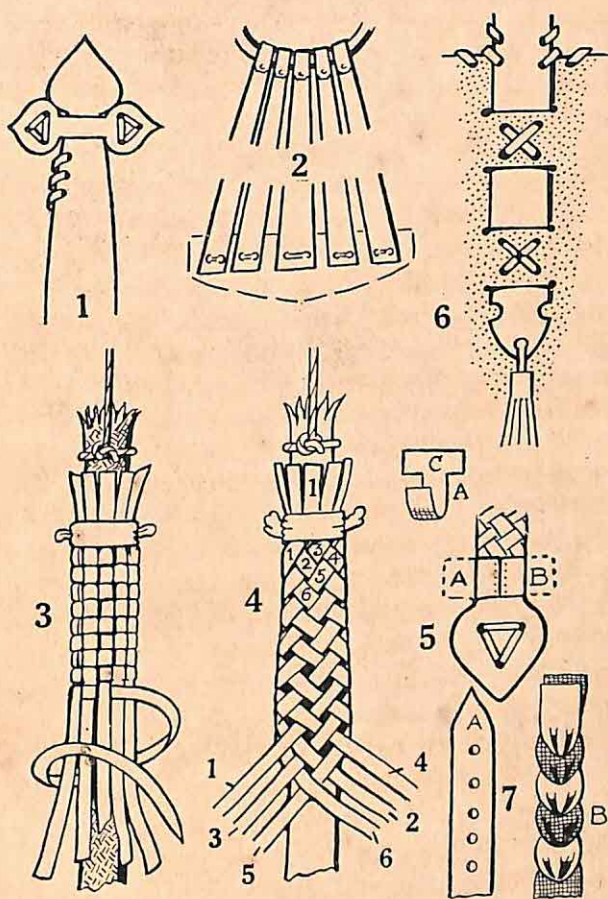


Plate 26

be plaited on a smooth stick, such as a stout knitting pin of $\frac{1}{4}$ in. diameter. Six thongs are required, and they are arranged equally round the stick and tied in position as in Fig. 4, Plate 26. Number the thongs from 1 to 6. In working, thong No. 1 must be pulled to the left, making an angle of about 45° to the stick; thong No. 2 to the right at the same angle; thong No. 3 to the left, passing under thong No. 2; thong No. 4 to the right; thong No. 5 to the left, passing under thong No. 4 and over No. 2; thong No. 6 to the right, and so on; the stick in the meantime being turned round and the thongs held firmly in position between the thumb and fingers of the left hand. Equal tension should be used on each thong, which should be pulled either to the right or left at the same angle of 45° . Care must be taken to keep the thongs close together, so that no gaps appear, and so that the interlacing forms a regular diamond pattern.

The plaiting completed, remove from the stick by pushing (never pulling) and secure the ends with thread.

To attach to the bag, similar tabs are used as shown in the preceding handle.

A stronger form is obtained by plaiting the thongs round a stout cord, which is not removed. To facilitate the work, the cord is suspended by string and hook, as in the woven handle.

SIMPLE SOFT LEATHER HANDLE. A simple and effective handle in soft leather can be made by cutting two pieces of different coloured leathers to required length and about 1 in. wide. Using the large nib of the punch pliers, holes are punched down the centres of these two pieces about 1 in. apart, as at "A" (Fig. 7, Plate 26). One end of the pieces is cut off to a point

for insertion through the holes. The pieces are then inserted alternately through each other by means of the holes and pulled tight as in Fig. 7B. Care should be taken that the creases formed lie evenly along the handle. The ends can either be straightened off and thonged on to the bag or may be slit up and used as thongs for lacing the handle in. With a press button affixed to the ends this also makes an effective serviette ring.

FITTING STRAP HANDLE TO BAG. Slots are cut in the side or back of bag, of a width equal to the handle. These should be spaced one below the other, at distances equal to the width of the handle. The handle is made long enough to be carried through the slots, coming to the front at the lower one. The end of the strap should be pulled through to a sufficient length for fringing or for shaping to receive a tassel. (Fig. 6, Plate 26.) The portions of the handle appearing on the outside of the leather are decoratively thonged to the bag.

The above are but a few examples of the methods employed in producing a decorative effect through structural design. Many more, obviously governed by the type of work in hand, may be evolved. The general principles directing such work are, that it shall carry out the purpose for which it is intended, and form a decorative unit of the design as a whole. As an illustration of this, the handles of a bag should take up all the weight in the bag, without pulling the bag into a bad shape. The handle may be carried right round the bag, thus forming a decorative unit; and its method of attachment should also aid in this direction. It is hardly necessary to say that all experiments should be carried out as paper patterns, thus eliminating all difficulties before the actual work is commenced.

CHAPTER XI

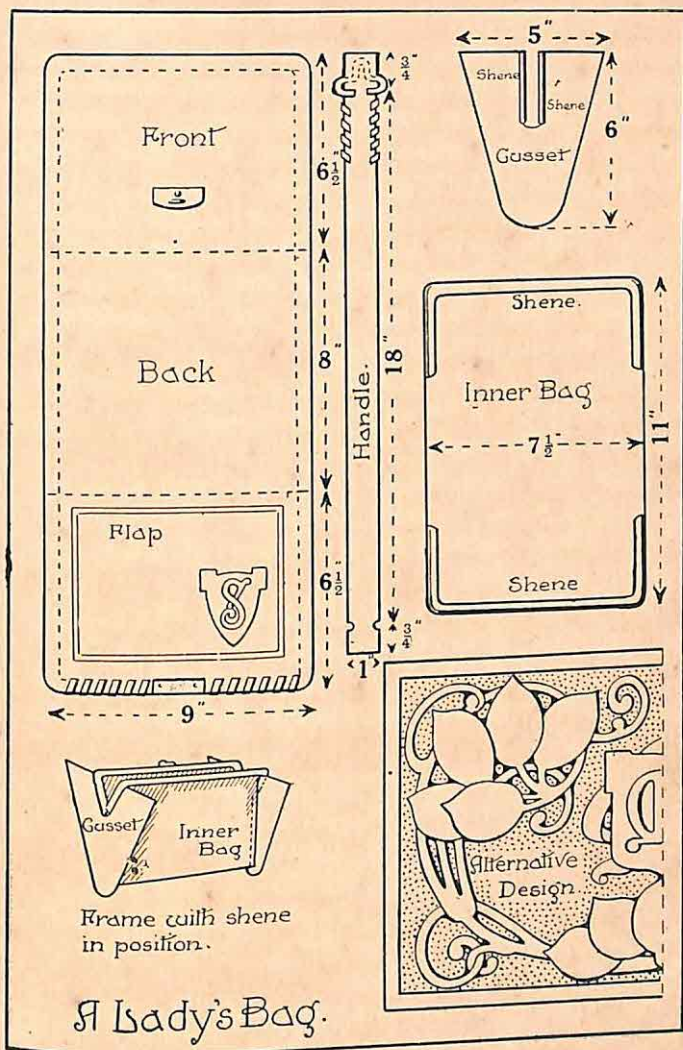
MAKING UP LADY'S BAG AND BOX

A LADY'S BAG. (*Plate 27.*) A piece of modelling calf, 9 in. $\times$ 21 in., will be required. Mark this off lightly at $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. from each end to show the width of the front and the flap respectively, leaving 8 in. in the middle, which forms the back of the bag.

In this particular bag the ornament is confined to the flap, and the panel in which the design is to appear is to be enclosed by a fillet or band $\frac{1}{8}$ in. wide. This fillet should next be marked off at $\frac{3}{4}$ in. from the front edge. Make the two shorter sides 5 in. long, and also $\frac{3}{4}$ in. from the edge, and then join the ends to form the fourth side of the panel.

A word of warning with regard to filling the space available on bag flaps, etc., will not be out of place here. A mistake frequently made by beginners is to carry the ornament too near the edge of the leather. At least $\frac{3}{4}$ in. margin should be allowed, bearing in mind that the thonging, where used, will occupy a portion of this space. It is also important to make provision for press buttons, etc. Usually these will be placed within the thonging, but the space they require should be incorporated in the design—not hacked out of it.

The shield and monogram should next be drawn out to size on paper and transferred to the leather. These ornaments may be placed as shown in the illustration or may occupy the centre of the panel. An alternative design is given for those who feel proficient to attempt it.



It will be better if these, and other designs given elsewhere, are drawn on squared paper. This procedure is to be recommended as a great labour saver in cases where it is desired to enlarge or reduce the designs. In the present instance the panel to be decorated is $7\frac{1}{4}$ in. $\times$ $4\frac{3}{4}$ in. Make a drawing to this size and divide it out into the same number of squares as the design, only half of which is illustrated. By numbering the squares it is an easy matter to copy the half design, and the other half is obtained by merely tracing and reversing.

Proceed with the modelling as already described. In forming the fillet, use a straight-edge (not a steel one) as a guide for the modelling tool.

When the modelling is completed the staining is proceeded with, followed by fixing the catch of the clasp. These operations are described under their respective headings.

For the lining, select a skiver of a shade which matches the colouring of the bag, and cut to size (viz. 9 in. $\times$ 21 in.). Paste the back of the modelling calf well and lay the skiver upon it, smooth side uppermost, and rub down gently.

Persian velvet may be used to make a better quality lining, but it is more expensive. If this is used the velvet side should be left exposed.

When the lining is dry, lay the bag (calf side up) on a piece of millboard and proceed to punch the slots for thonging, allowing a space for the knob of the clasp, which should now be fixed.

The bag proper may now be placed on one side and the inner pockets and gussets prepared.

The pocket, 11 in. $\times$ $7\frac{1}{2}$ in., should be cut from a

Persian velvet of suitable colour. Skiver alone is not strong enough. If used it should be lined with brown holland or similar material. The corners of this piece must be rounded to fit the shene of the frame.

To prepare the gussets, cut two pieces, 5 in. $\times$ 6 in., as shown, the width across the bottom before the curve commences being 2 in. These should be of stout leather, either Persian velvet or alternatively, two pieces of skiver pasted together on their smooth sides. Make a slit in each to the depth of the shenes, and round the corners at the top of the slit to fit the shene.

Now fold the leather for the pocket in two (if Persian velvet, the velvet side should be inwards) and attach the upper portions of the pocket by means of adhesive, to the slits in the gusset. The edges of the slits must be turned towards the ends of the bag. (Plate 27.) When the parts are quite dry, the gussets and pocket may be placed in the shenes, and the latter hammered down.

The next operation is to stitch, or oversew, the lower portions of the ends of the pockets. When this has been done the shenes may be riveted in position in the frame.

The gussets are now fixed in position in the bag by means of adhesive. It will be found that the thonging slots in the bag proper will now require to be repierced where the gussets have been attached. This should be done with care, the leather being supported on a small block of hard wood placed on the edge of the table.

As an alternative, the gussets may be punched separately, but in this case very great care is required to ensure that the slots coincide with those of the bag, and this method is not recommended.

Trim up the edges where necessary and proceed with the thonging. Start from the knob of the clasp and continue all round the bag, finishing at the other side of the knob.

Cut a piece of modelling calf, $19\frac{1}{2}$ in. $\times$ 1 in., to make the handle. Three-quarters of an inch from either end make small notches on either edge, and skive the leather from the notches to the ends. Fold the skived piece back on to the underside and attach with adhesive, the notches now being at the ends. Line the handle with skiver for the entire length and, when dry, punch and thong each side.

Fittings for attaching the handle to the bag are supplied with the frame. Open the broad end of the fitting and thread it through the ring in the frame. then work the points of the broad end through the notches at the end of the handle. Make sure that both points are well home and then squeeze the broad end of the fitting together again with a pair of nippers.

Complete bags are shown on Plate 28.

It will sometimes be found necessary, instead of using the V-shaped gusset, to use one which extends round three sides of the bag, i.e. two sides and the bottom. The gusset is cut to required length and width. This is folded, so that the two long edges meet, and the grain is inside. A definite crease is made. Re-open the leather, and at a point where the corner of the bag would occur, fold the leather back on itself (pile faces touching), so that a transverse crease is formed. Again open the leather, and the two creases will be seen, at right angles. From the intersection of these, mark off, along the long part of the long crease, a distance equal to half the transverse crease, and

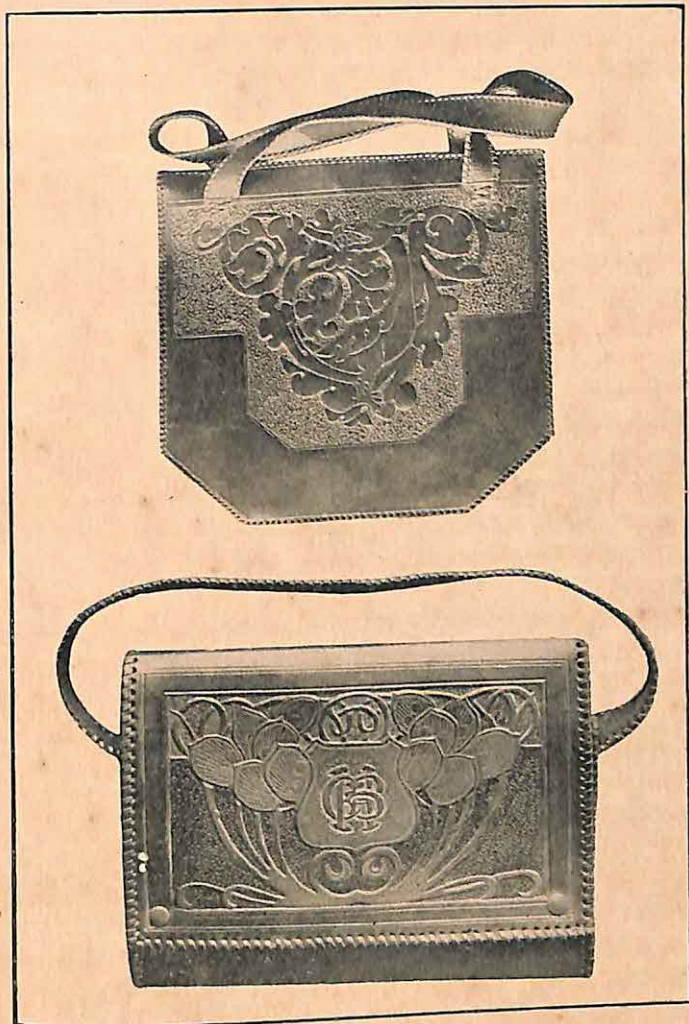


Plate 28

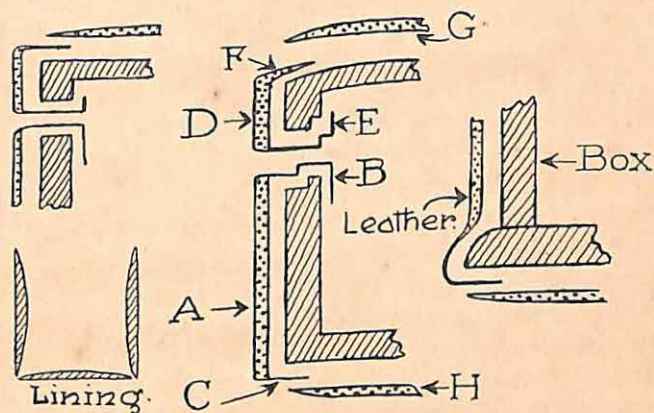
mark a point. From the ends of the transverse crease to this point, form two definite creases, by folding grain sides together. Hold nearly flat, with grain side uppermost. Bring the edges of the long portion of the gusset together as before; and also bring the edges of the shorter portion together, in a similar manner. If the corner has been creased correctly, the whole should come together naturally, and form a right angle. Repeat the process for the other corner.

TO MAKE UP A BOX COVERED WITH MODELLED LEATHER. Up to this stage we have only considered the making up of articles, the main structure of which has been leather, which could be decorated whilst flat and afterwards built up to form the article.

In the case of a box you must commence with a wooden structure, the dimensions of which are suitable for the use to which the box has to be put. Ready-made boxes may be purchased, but it is far preferable to make your own. You can then fix all dimensions and the general shape to suit yourself, and also make the necessary allowances for the thickness of the leather at the point where the lid fits the box, etc. (Fig. 1, Plate 29.) A box purchased ready made, whether with hinged lid or the "drop-on" type, will require to be carefully worked down with a file or coarse sand-paper, and the structure may be weakened in the process.

Paper patterns of the pieces of leather required should next be cut out. One piece *A* extends round the body of the box and slightly overlaps in the centre of the back. When this piece of leather has been cut to the pattern, it may be skived to make a perfect joint. This piece of leather should also be made

COVERING BOXES.



sufficiently deep to go over the top of the body and down the inside of the box *B*, as well as to turn under the base *C*.

A second piece *D* is required to surround the lid, and similar provision has to be made for joining, and also for turning over the top at *F* and up inside the lid at *E*.

Two further pieces, *G* and *H*, of the same length and breadth as the box, are required for the top and bottom; the latter piece may be of skiver.

When the leather has been cut to shape, all the edges are to be skived, care being taken to provide a very wide skiving at *B* and *E*.

In all cases the leather must be put on the box before the modelling is begun.

Rub a little adhesive on the part of the box to be covered, then seccotine the under side of the covering piece very thinly, and when the seccotine is "tacky" place the leather in position and rub down gently until it adheres firmly. Every care should be taken not to stretch the leather, and on no account should the adhesive be allowed to stain the modelling side.

The body of the box should be covered first, then the bottom. Provided the skiving has been well done the joints at the edges and up the back will hardly be visible.

The lid is covered in the same way, leaving the top piece till last and paying particular attention to the joints.

In the case of a hinged box, notches should be cut for them in the back of *D*. This can best be done when sticking down.

When the box has been completely covered, leave

it to become thoroughly dry, and then proceed with the modelling. Whilst modelling, the box should be placed on some thick, clean material to prevent possible soiling.

To add colour to the "antique" finish, Ruskin stones may be embodied in the design with good effect. The stone must be fastened in position on the box before the leather, and a hole, slightly smaller than the stone, cut in the latter, and skived round the under edges. The leather then holds the stone firmly in place.

If key-holes are required, they are best cut after the leather is in place. They should be finished off with a small silver escutcheon, which can be obtained from a jeweller, or better still, made up by yourself from a little sheet silver.

The method of lining the box is similar to that employed for the blotter. Silk or other material is stretched over stiff paper, any padding required being obtained by inserting cotton wool between the material and the paper. The top and bottom are put in first; then the sides, which should be in one piece.

Staining and polishing are done as previously described, care being taken not to "lift" the joints.

CHAPTER XII

SOFT AND MODELLED LEATHER IN COMBINATION

SOFT AND MODELLED LEATHER IN COMBINATION. Soft and modelled leathers may be combined to produce many beautiful articles, such as table-runners, table-centres, bags, blotters, ash-tray holders, etc.

No new process is introduced with the exception of the method of thonging the two leathers together in the case of table-centres or bags, and the "laced-in" work for blotters and the like.

For thonging on, two rows of holes are to be punched, one set through both leathers, just inside the edge of the modelled panel, the other in the soft leather just outside the same edge; these holes should be placed exactly opposite each other. The edge may then be very effectively thonged with any of the stitches previously described. "Staggered" holes only permit a restricted range of thonging. (Fig. 2, Plate 31.) The method of "lacing-in" is shown in Fig. 3. A piece is cut out of the article slightly larger than the panel to be inserted. A stout thong or piece of thong is placed round the edge of the panel and thonged into position as at *A*. The ends of this thong (or cord) are left loose so that it may be slackened when lacing-in. To insert, the thong from the article is carried under the loose thong or cord, as at *B*, thus forming a "herring-bone" pattern. Care must be taken that the panel does not pull round, thus throwing it out of the vertical. When the thonging is done, the loose ends of the thong or cord are taken to the back and tied.

Mirror.
Silver fittings.



Card-box.



Chalice Case
Note Book.

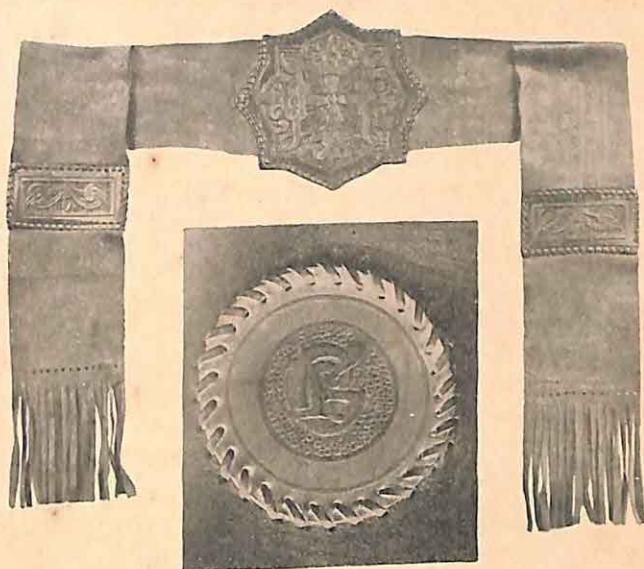


Serviette Ring Case. Ivory fittings.

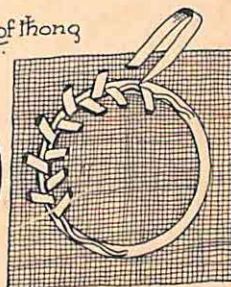
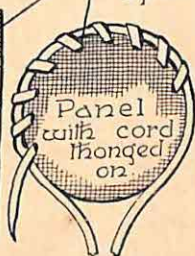
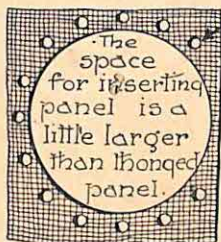
INLAID LEATHER. Although eminently suitable for "soft" articles, applied leather is not so satisfactory for more substantial articles, such as boxes. In this case we have to resort to inlaid work. Similar patterns are used, the only difference being that in inlay they are "let in" whereas appliqué is "laid on." In soft leatherwork the box, or other article, is first covered all over with the leather which is to be used as a ground colour. The paper pattern is then laid over the part to be worked and carefully traced with a steel point. Using a sharp knife (a Japanese stencil knife is best), the traced pattern is carefully cut around the outline, especial care being taken to cut right through the leather. The pattern is then "lifted." This should be done without stretching the leather, as the lifted pieces can then be used again as inlay. The parts of the box exposed should be scraped clean, and this should be done without damaging the edges of the cut leather. The pattern is next traced on to the various coloured leathers required and carefully cut out. With the aid of an adhesive they are fixed in their allotted spaces and rubbed down to the surrounding level. As soft leathers "give" a little, it will not be found difficult to "fit up" with the pattern. This should not be depended upon too much, as it is far better to be exact with the cutting. The pattern may be left as inlaid or the "join" may be punched round with a small tool, such as the ring punch or "dot." The illustration shows a simple pattern suitable for carrying round the sides of a box.

In inlaying modelled leather very great care must be exercised in the cutting, as it does not "give" like the soft variety. The panel to be inlaid is cut to the

COMBINATION OF LEATHERS.



Lacing in.

Holes - width of thong
apart.

Cord.

Plate 31

required size and shape, and if thicker than the leather used for the ground, the edges will have to be pared to agree with the thickness. The panel is laid in position on the covered box, and its limits marked with a steel point. The ground leather is cut along these lines and then lifted. Care must be taken in inserting the panel not to damage the modelling. The finish can be as with soft leather. The illustration shows a modelled panel (adapted from the "Toothache column" at Wells Cathedral) inlaid in a morocco book cover. Many very charming effects can be obtained by inlaying modelled calf in Persian velvets, using the pile side uppermost.

SPECIAL FITTINGS. So far, reference has only been made to fittings which may be purchased, and are therefore common property. The creative mind, however, will hardly remain content in conforming to such limitations, and the time will come when the fittings will form an integral part of the structural design, and will be made by the craftsman himself.

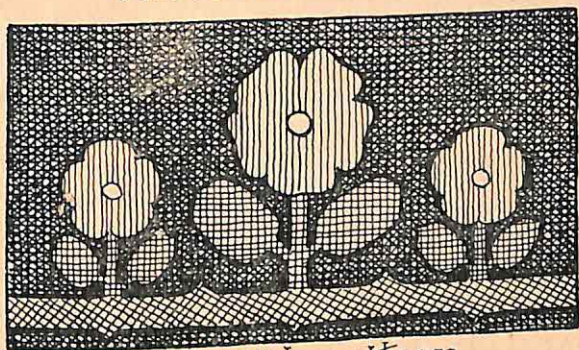
Among the various materials which may be used with advantage in conjunction with leather, ivory is undoubtedly the best. Part of the animal itself, it is easily worked and adaptable to the making of feet, handles, escutcheons, knobs, etc., by the expediency of fretting, turning, and carving. Confined chiefly to box fittings, it gives an added charm to the colour scheme and opens up a wider scope in the field of design. Bone and bonzaline may be used as substitutes but have their limitations.

Discrimination should be shown in the use of silver with either soft or modelled leatherwork. In excess it defeats its own ends, whereas if used sparingly it gives

INLAY.



Modelled Leather.



Soft Leather.

an effect of refinement. For chains, frames, clasps, hinges, and for inlaid work it forms an easily-worked material and can be used either hammered, polished, or oxidized.

Colour may also be obtained in design by the use of semi-precious stones and cabochons. These are mounted in a silver plate setting, and inserted from the back of the leather, as with Ruskin stones.

In soft leatherwork much can be made of the wooden bead. Of almost any section, turned or carved, self or coloured, they form a useful adjunct to cords, tassels, straps, and general decoration.

CHAPTER XIII

SUGGESTIONS

LEATHERCRAFT opens up a very wide field of interesting work, and the objects to which the craft may be applied are great in number.

Very often the question of expense deters us from carrying out some piece of work. Leatherwork can, but need not necessarily, become expensive.

Even when the initial cost is great it is well to remember that the well-considered design (structural and ornamental), carried out in a thoroughly craftsmanlike manner, is always worth while.

It is only the ill-considered effort that is really expensive.

The beginner is usually faced with the problem of "What can I make?" and with this in mind, a short list is appended of small articles easily made.

Book-markers	Serviette rings
Spectacle cleaners	Posies
Shopping list cover	Notebook covers
Note-cases	Mirror backs
Pochettes	Purses
Vanity bags	Comb-cases
Scissor-cases	Knife-cases
Season ticket holders	Stamp-cases
Book carrier	Fountain pen holder.

A further list of the more uncommon articles follows, with suggestions for their making up. To the creative mind, many more will present themselves. With logical reasoning and a knowledge of the craft these

problems will become a delightful and pleasurable pastime.

Baby's shoes in woven soft leather.

Waistcoat in woven soft leather, faced and stitched.

Cushion covers.

Woven leather as a panel in upholstery or for fire screen.

Table-centre. This is, perhaps, happiest in the shape of a Latin Cross formed of five squares. The basis of the table-centre is soft leather, the four outer squares being modelled leather panels thonged on. The soft leather could be extended beyond the modelled panels to form a fringe.

Table-runner. This is of soft leather with modelled panels thonged on near the extremities.

Case for holding Prayer and Hymn books, either in soft leather or modelled calf.

Tobacco pouch. Designed to hold a rubber lining.

Spectacle or pince-nez case in modelled calf.

Camera-case. Modelled calf with Ruskin stone.

Opera-glass case.

Military brush case.

Collar-box. This could be carried out either in modelled leather as a box, or in soft leather with a firm base and a drawing cord.

Case for manicure set in roll form.

Safety-razor case.

Case for travelling clock.

Snapshot album in modelled or soft leather with loose leaves. The covers are so made that holes may be punched about 1 in. from the back. The leaves are punched in a similar manner so that the whole may be fastened together by means of a silk cord.

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GLOSSARY

Antique. A dark, golden-brown finish, suggesting age, obtained by staining and polishing.

Appliqué. Form of decoration by attaching one material upon the surface of another.

Back. The middle, and in modelling calf, the best portion of a skin.

Backing up. Reinforcing at the back by leather or other material, to secure increased stiffness or strength.

Blanket stitch. A well-known form of lock stitch.

Basil. Cheaply prepared sheepskin. Only suitable for the broadest modelling, and does not take stain well.

Belly. The sides of a skin.

Burning. Damage done by friction of a tool upon dry leather.

Cabachon. A small semi-precious stone.

Calf. The best modelling leather.

Cap. Outer portion of a press button.

Carbon paper. Thin paper coated on one side with lampblack or similar substance; used for duplicating designs, etc., by tracing.

Cartridge paper. Stout paper, ordinarily used for drawing.

Chamois. Very soft leather, made from goat skin. Useful for lining jewel cases, etc.

Clamp. Light wooden press for holding work between the knees to leave both hands free for thonging and stitching.

Convention. Term used of form, colour, etc., which may be accepted as representing an idea, without being copied in detail from the object with which the idea is associated.

Crewe punch. Tool for producing wide slots.

Cutting board. A zinc-lined board, upon which the leather is cut, modelled, or pared. The zinc is hard enough to support the leather, but not to dull the knife.

Developing. Setting out the shape of an article with its necessary constructive additions.

Die. Metal disc, with one flat and one hollow side. Used for fixing press buttons.

Dresden tool. Used for modelling. One end is fine, the other broad.

Edge shave. Tool used for removing the rough under edges of leathers or thongs.

Embossing. Forcing up the leather, by applying a special tool at the back, to a greater height than can be obtained by modelling. Bosses so formed are permanently supported with wax or a stuffing composed of paper or cotton wool mixed with paste.

Ending off. Method of securing the end of a lace when thonging when finished.

Escutcheon. Shield-like piece of metal protecting a keyhole.

Eyelet. Flanged metal ring for fixing press buttons to leather.

Fillet. A narrow raised band.

Frame. Hinged metal rim for the mouth of a lady's bag.

Grain. The smooth natural exterior surface of leather, from which the hair has been removed. Also imitated artificially in split leathers.

Gusset. Flexible tapered end-piece which permits a bag to close but limits its opening.

Hide. The skin of the ox as distinct from calf.

Hollow punch. Also "negative" used for fixing the spring of the press button.

Incising. A method of cutting round the ornament slightly with a knife before sinking the background.

Inlay. The combination of two leathers by setting one in spaces cut in the other, the surfaces being level. Distinct from appliqué, where the design is raised, and pierced work, where it is sunk.

Interlaced. Used (a) of laces or thongs that cross alternately over and under each other, (b) of bands in ornament that cross in the same way.

Lace or thong. Strip of calf or Persian velvet threaded through slots or holes for the purpose of joining two pieces of leather, protecting edges, or simply for ornament.

Lacing. Term usually confined to pattern formed in the leather not on the edges.

Lacing calf. A thin variety of calf used for cutting into thongs or linings.

Lock. Form of thonging in which each stitch secures itself.

Lie. The "settling down" of a thong into a right position.

Limp. Flexible. A term applied to covers for books, etc.

Matt. A rough surface. Used particularly of backgrounds, whether pricked, or patterned with a special punch.

Modeller. A double-ended modelling tool, broader than the Dresden. Either S- or bow-shaped.

Monotone. Designed in varied tones of one colour.

Mop. A thick circular brush used in laying on large washes of colour, or stain.

Mnemonic. Decorative lettering used as a reminder.

Natural. A term applied to unstained leather.

Opening. Expanding by inserting the modelling tool, the cuts made by incising.

Outlining. Modelling a ridge round the edge of a form.

Paring. Thinning down the edge of leather by use of a knife.

Pest. Several varieties of insects that lay their eggs beneath the skin of the living animal. The larvae emerge and make a hole which spoils the leather.

Pierced work. Cutting the design *out* of the front leather so that the back is seen through it, the converse of appliqué.

Pile. The under, or flesh side of leather. Also called the velvet side.

Plait. The continued interlacing of several strips or thongs to form a cord or strap.

Positive punch. Tool with projecting peg, for fixing press buttons.

Press button. A spring fastening for a bag: similar to a glove button.

Pricking. Roughening the surface of the background by stabbing with a pointed tool.

Pricking iron. A tool which makes a line of equally-spaced holes for stitching.

Prong. Tool for punching several slots at equal spacings.

Pulling. (a) A skin is more elastic from side to side than from neck to tail.

(b) The distortion of ornament in modelling by stretching the surface.

Realistic. Form, colour, etc., which aim at exactly reproducing natural effects.

Relief. Ornament raised from a background: three degrees are recognized—high, middle, and low.

Rubbing down. Sliding pressure, applied by the palm or the ball of the thumb; to force surfaces into intimate contact and assist adhesion.

Run. The passage of a thong from one hole to another on the front of the leather, without going over the edge to the back.

Ruskin stone. Brightly enamelled earthenware made by the Ruskin Potteries.

Setting out. Planning, drawing, and tracing the design.

Shene. Soft iron inner frame, which grips the leather tightly, so that it can be secured to the outer or true frame.

Skiver. The outer (grain or hair side) layer of leather produced by skiving.

Skiving. (a) Splitting a skin horizontally into several thicknesses.

(b) Bevelling an edge by paring.

Slot. Long, narrow aperture as distinct from a punched hole.

Spirit stain. Colouring matter mixed with methylated spirit.

Spring. The projecting stud of a press button which "snaps" into the cap.

Staggering. The arrangement of holes in rows so that a hole in each row is opposite a space in the preceding one.

Squared paper. Paper ruled into squares by lines at regular intervals. Useful for enlarging or reducing designs.

Suede. A soft leather dressed for the velvet side.

Tag. Piece of thin sheet brass or other metal rolled to a point round the end of a thong to facilitate threading.

Thong. Synonymous with lace.

Thong wheel. A tool cutting a continuous line of slots for thonging when rolled under pressure.

Velvet. The pile side of a soft leather.

Water stain. Colouring matter specially prepared for diluting with water.

Weaving. The interlacing of strips at right angles to form continuous surface.

Whip. A stitch in thonging similar to oversewing.

Wire brush. A very stiff brush of fine wire instead of bristles: useful for restoring pile of leathers.

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